

FIVE SERMONS

PREACHED

BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE,

THE FIRST FOUR IN NOVEMBER 1845,

THE FIFTH ON THE GENERAL FAST DAY,
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 1847.

BY THE

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P R E F A C E.

IF any of my readers should think it worth while to ask why Sermons which had been preached in 1845, as was the case with the first four in this Volume, should appear now, and not till now; I have only to reply, that much occupation at the moment, and some procrastination, combined to prevent my complying with a wish which many who heard them were pleased to express, that they should be printed, till I thought the time for it was past, and the interest, whatever they might have excited, had expired. But when similar intimations reached me with respect to the Sermon delivered before the University on the General Fast-day in the present year, I determined to take that opportunity of publishing them all together, rather than send out the latter by itself; and accordingly they are all now given to the public, just as they were addressed to the audience, with the exception of a few verbal alterations of trifling account.

CAMBRIDGE, *October 1, 1847.*

SERMON I.

(Preached at Great St. Mary's, Cambridge, Nov. 9, 1845.)

PROVERBS XIV. 9.

Fools make a mock at sin.

I TAKE the sense of this verse to be that which our own translation gives to it—"Fools make a mock at sin: but amongst the righteous there is favour"—i. e. fools make a mock at sin, which is an abomination to the Lord; but amongst the righteous is that which is his delight—viz. no such levity. The sentiment, congenial with that which is contained in other passages of the Proverbs (iii. 34.; i. 26.; x. 23); the antithesis, so characteristic of the Proverbs, adequately preserved; and some of the early versions concurring in it: I shall presume therefore upon this being the meaning of the text, and argue from it accordingly. Now there is a singular expression in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which speaks of the exceeding sinfulness of sin: God having given a law against which the natural man rose in rebellion, that law, says the Apostle, served to show how exceeding sinful was sin; for though good in itself, and meant for good, it was made by man the occasion of evil; his refractory spirit only longing the more for that which the law interdicted. S. Paul puts the case thus pointedly, uses this remarkable phraseology, "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," as though to apprise us, that mankind wanted their attention drawn to its intensity—that so corrupt are they by nature, and so accustomed to the contemplation of sin from their birth, that they are not fully alive to its character; have no

adequate perception of its enormity ; have need to be made to penetrate its qualities more deeply. Lot had not dwelt long enough in Sodom to have his moral sense sunk to the standard of the place ; and accordingly we read, that “ he was *vexed* with the filthy conversation of the wicked ;” that “ that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, *vexed* his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.” It probably wanted but a few years’ residence more in that devoted society, to have made his eyes as dim as those of the other inhabitants of the place, to the wickedness there was in it—for it was evidently beginning to take its effect on him. Eli, when his sons were committing the grossest abominations, though still priests themselves, only administered to them the rebuke, “ Why do ye such things ? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear ; ye make the Lord’s people to transgress.” The sense of sin in Eli was manifestly impaired. The dominance of the Philistines in the land had probably debased even the household of God ; inasmuch that God would in those days, we are told, vouchsafe no open vision ; and even allowed his ark to be carried away by the unbelievers, and to be wrested from the natural but unworthy guardians of it. Eli himself therefore was hindered from seeing, in its true light, the sin of his sons ; which otherwise he must have thought monstrous, and not such as required to be smitten merely with a “ Nay, my sons.” And yet God has not left sin without a witness of its heinousness, whether we consult his world, or his word. But “ my people will not *consider*,” was God’s complaint of old ; and may very well be God’s complaint still : for surely if we would apply our minds to the subject, with the same determination

we do to other matters of mere passing interest, we should at any rate receive very different impressions of the nature of sin, from those we are apt to entertain, however inadequate they might be still : for, in truth, it should seem to be a part of the express office of the Comforter, “to *convince* the world of sin;” to make it appear by proof, and to make mankind themselves admit the fact, in the full sense of it, that they are sinners ;—so little disposed are we of ourselves to such an acknowledgment in the strength of the conviction which the case requires. Yet it is impossible to behold the ravages which sin is found to effect, whether as set forth in the system in which we live, or in the Bible which we read, without coming to the conclusion that there is something in it wonderfully malignant. A morsel of poison may seem a little dust in a balance, and nothing more ; yet when we see the agonies it inflicts on him who meddles with it, we are taught to know the venom that lurks in it—and of sin we may say the same. *That* may not look so very appalling to our eyes, (we are familiar with it); but let us mark the mischief it breeds, and then we shall learn to estimate more correctly the evil there is in it. What is it that fills the world with slaughter and bloodshed, and all the terrible disasters which attend the rising up of nation against nation, but sin? “From whence come wars and fightings among you?” says S. James ; “come they not hence, even from your lusts, that war in your members?” Probably, when the news arrives of a battle won, and a field strewed with dead, we regard it mainly as a triumph of arms, a trophy of national glory ; yet it might be very well contemplated as a dreadful monument of sin ; for if there had been no sin, there would have been no slaughter : and very well might it lead

us to the thought, how deadly must that principle be in itself which can deal out death so largely ! Probably, when we traverse the country, and observe our gaols, our hospitals, our mad-houses, we may indulge in the reflection, how satisfactory it is to live in a land where law prevails over brute force ; where humanity provides for the wants and necessities of the sick ; and the sound in mind do not forget the forlorn condition of the melancholy and the maniac. And such reflections are just and right ; but there are others connected with those scenes of sorrow no less legitimate, though more humiliating,—even a sense of the deep scars of sin, which these institutions more or less betray, on the constitution of man. What tales of horror would those prison-walls tell, if they could describe, not merely the terrors and troubles which the wretched inmates that have occupied them successively, have themselves experienced, but the desolation they have carried far and wide to others ; the peace of families they have destroyed ; the shame they have inflicted ; the hearts they have broken—all this the *immediate* fruits of sin. Or, where those fruits may be more *remote* ; if we could read in the present tenants of the wards of those lazar-houses, or the cells of those bedlams, the past career, not merely of them, but of their fathers and forefathers, how often should we find that some sin, or course of sinning, forgotten and buried in the oblivion of years or of ages gone by, after hunting its victim through a third or fourth generation, had now at length run him down, and discharged upon him the arrear of misery, which as surely overtakes wickedness sooner or later, as the night the day. History, both sacred and profane, is full of instances of this dispensation ; though we can only produce them from the former with confidence ; because, where revelation is

silent, we cannot take upon ourselves to trace with certainty the operations of God's judicial hand, however we may suspect them, and however we may feel the events of which we read in the secular historian to be proceeding exactly after the same manner as those of which we read in the sacred. Herodotus and Xenophon, for example, relate the deeds of Cyrus, just as they would those of any other man, and ascribe them to the same secondary causes; yet we *know*, in this particular case, that the party was working out God's counsels, because Cyrus happens to be the subject of the inspired historian too. Sacred and profane history, I say, are full of instances of this dispensation, though we can only draw them with safety from the sacred. Who would have supposed that the slaughter of the Amalekites in the time of Saul was a judgment for the offence of Amalek against the Israelites when they passed through the wilderness centuries ago? Yet so it was, (1 Sam. xv. 2). Who would have thought of the famine in King David's days being the consequence of a sin at all, much less of a sin committed long and long before? Yet it was "for Saul and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites," (2 Sam. xxi. 1)—the Gibeonites, whose covenant made 300 years back, God, it seems, had not lost sight of, but vindicated even yet. How different a view would politicians have taken of this incident! Again, the priesthood was to have remained in the line of Eli: but upon the sin of that old man's sons, to which I have already alluded, God revoked his promise, (which, like his promises in general, was contingent); resented the prostitution of his honour; and exclaimed, "I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me. . . . I will raise me up a faithful priest; and it

shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of bread." (1 Sam. ii. 36). Yet God was far from fulfilling his threat on the instant. Indeed, those who judge according to the manner of men, would have supposed that he had forgotten it: so long is he in bending his bow, and making it ready. But the fatality which was at that early period suspended over Eli's family, did eventually fall on it, though slowly. The priesthood still continued in his posterity. Though Saul, long afterwards, slew all the priests but one, Abiathar escaped, and in him the blood of Eli still held the office. But David, for reasons which do not appear, gave him a colleague in Zadok—did not discard him, but gave him a colleague—a colleague, not of the family of Eli, the descent of Zadok being from Eleazar, and not from Ithamar, (1 Chron. xxiv. 3.) In the rebellion of Absalom there are symptoms, perhaps, but nothing more, of Abiathar being cool in the cause of David. In the subsequent outbreak of Adonijah, Abiathar openly took the rebel's part (1 Kings i. 7.) But he proved, it would have been said by ordinary observers, mistaken in his politics. The loyal priest turned out to be on the winning side; and the end of Abiathar was, that Solomon thrust him out of the priesthood, (1 Kings ii. 27); banished him from Jerusalem; and only abstained from putting him to death, because he had borne the ark before David, and shared his troubles. But this came to pass some hundred and fifty years after the sin of Eli's sons, of which it was the visitation—so long was that sin in working out its sure catastrophe: the parties concerned in the curse meanwhile unconscious perhaps of the way in which the events of the day were quietly maturing it; and possibly the actual sufferer himself; unless the discomfort of his

degradation and the solitude of "his own fields," turned his thoughts to bygone times, and taught him that "doubtless there is a God that judges the earth,"—as it was not till a similar crisis, many years after their sin, and when the trouble they had got into, gave them cause to reflect, that the brethren of Joseph said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear, *therefore is this distress come upon us.*"

Or, if we confine our speculations to a smaller compass, and observe what misery there may be in any street, village, or knot of houses, with which we are best acquainted, and which we know, as the minister of a parish, for instance, may know it, in detail; we shall find that not natural causes over which we have no control, but *sin*, is at the bottom of nearly all of it. It will not be poverty in itself; or untoward accidents in themselves; or sickness in itself; or even death in itself; that shall have troubled that little community; but *sin*. Indeed, so far are all these contingencies from being necessary sources of evil, that they are often admitted to be blessings. How many a rich man, who has waxed poor, has been taught by his poverty of purse, poverty of spirit, and has blessed the hour when he was compelled to accept penury and peace of mind, for wealth and worldliness! How often has vaulting ambition been thankful for its own overthrow, and discovered, to its surprise, that the humbled heart which has come after the fall, is far happier than the haughty one which went before it! How often has the sick man found, with the Psalmist, that it was good for him to be afflicted—good, even for his enjoyment of life; and that he is much more than compensated for an enfeebled body, by passions abated and lusts subdued;

by higher hopes and nobler aspirations ; and a stronger sense of the abiding presence of an approving God ! How often does it come to pass—who has not witnessed the case scores of times, if he has been conversant with the chambers of death at all—that even the dying man—yes, the dying man, whose relish of life has been of the keenest, and whose ties to it are of the strongest kind still, has found charms in the sacred calm of his present estate, and the anticipated glories of his future one, which have not only reconciled him to his removal, but which would not allow him to recal the days of his health and strength, if he could do it by a word ! And how often, again, has it turned out, that when men have been required to encounter the death of some member of their family, instead of meeting their own, sharp as has been their anguish for a season, the time has arrived, when they would not have fetched him back by a sigh ; when events have served to shew that he was taken away perhaps from the evil to come ; or, that he has shed benefits by his departure on those he has left behind, which he could not have done by his continuance among them ; so that they confess his death was not a dismal disaster, but a merciful interposition !

It is not, therefore, these things that poison the cup of life—though the misuse of them may, doubtless, make them do so—it is not these things, we shall perceive, which have wrought the discomfort, whatever there may exist, in that little community we are closely contemplating, but *sin*. It is not we—but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord. It is *sin*. It may be the sin of slander which has set one neighbour against the other ; or the sin of pride, which has made one lord it over the other ; or the sin of envy, which has

made one disparage the other ; or the sin of lying, which has made one distrust the other ; or the sin of guile, which has made one suspicious of the other ; or the sin of idleness, which has made one starve the other ; or the sin of covetousness, which has made one pinch the other ; or the sin of ingratitude, which has made one harden his heart against the other ; or the sin of intemperance, which has clothed whole families with rags ; or the sin of uncleanness, which has made their very bones hollow. These have been the banes of their peace. It is not the disasters which have entered into those houses, we shall find, but the devils which have entered in, that have undone them.

Or, to narrow our observation yet more. If we want to be made aware of the venom there is in sin, only were its nature developed, let any man consider the discomfort, the disquietude, it works in his own heart ; what a sting it leaves behind it there ; what a tumult and disorder, and dejection, it occasions in any man's own bosom—a wounded spirit, a spirit so wounded, who can bear ? Look at the Psalmist, and contrast him in his youth and comparative innocence, when chosen of God, because an excellent spirit was in him ; and in his age, when his sins had found him out, and his heart was broken at the remembrance of them. How brave and bold is he when he goes forth to meet the Philistine ! How frank and hearty all his pleasant intercourse with Jonathan ! How generous and full of trust in God's good providence all his conduct towards Saul, when he was vainly hunting him on the mountains ! How jubilant his voice in his psalms, when somewhat later than this, but still in his better days, he was permitted to establish the ark of God in his capital, and danced before it, saying, " Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; and be ye lift up, ye

everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in !” How sunk and spiritless is he after his sin against Uriah ! How suspicious of his friends ! how cast down before his enemies ! How does he droop before the curse of Shimei ! how conscious is he of its justice ! “ Let him alone, let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.” What can exceed the melancholy of the picture we now have of him : “ And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot ; and all the people that were with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up !” What can surpass now the despondency of his strains : “ Why art thou so heavy, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me !”

Perhaps, in the case of some sins, it is impossible to persuade ourselves even of their character as such, much less of their real amount, in any other way than by thus regarding their consequences. *Schism* seems to be such a sin. It is one which has long ceased to excite any compunction. It is, in popular estimation, liberty of thinking, or liberty of prophesying, or consent to differ. Yet look at its effects. Is it not this which *cripples* us as a Christian country ? which makes it all but impracticable to provide any adequate or systematic religious instruction for the vast population which has sprung up in our manufacturing and mining districts ; so that the ignorance, the unbelief, the loathsome vice, of those quarters is appalling ? Is it not this which long left, if it does not still leave, so many of our union-houses with their forlorn and helpless inmates utterly without godly teaching ; and so many more of them most insufficiently supplied with it ? Is it not this, too, which debases our colonies ; and causes multitudes of peasants

and artisans, and even of convicts themselves, to quit our shores for distant settlements, without the slightest order taken by the nation for securing their everlasting interests? For as we cannot agree in what form Christian instruction is to be communicated, the alternative is adopted of abandoning it altogether.

I say, then, it is impossible for any thoughtful person to turn these things in his mind without coming to the conclusion, that in sin there must be a very pernicious principle, or its effects could not be so wide wasting as they are; that it is indeed "exceeding sinful" in its nature; and without having this thought in his heart too, that if these consequences are so terrible even here, in the green tree as it were, how desperate must they be hereafter, in the dry! how fearful, when their full and unrestrained fury shall be allowed to take effect in those regions of woe where sin shall have its unchecked, unmitigated, everlasting triumph!

But if we turn from the lessons on this subject which even the world in which we live reads to us, and consult the word of God for the *character* of sin; there do we find the venom which is in it set forth still more forcibly. For we there learn that it was the single sin of a single woman which was enough to blast the whole of this earth and all its inhabitants for ever; to reverse all the order of creation, which God had so shortly before pronounced to be very good; to cover the soil with thorns; to put enmity between one creature and another; to multiply the sorrow and conception of the half of the human race; to condemn the whole to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow; to suffer death at last, and after death judgment eternal. Nor was this all. It was that single sin of that single woman that is represented as having given cause for the Son of God himself

to quit the bosom of his Father, where he had dwelt in glory before all worlds ; to take upon him our nature ; submit to be born in the fashion of a man, and to humble himself to death, even the death of the cross ; nothing less than this sufficing to stop the infinite mischief that flowed from that sin as from a fountain. For our Lord himself, wrung by the agony he had to go through, actually besought his Father, that, if it *were possible*, that cup might pass from him ; that if the consequences of that first sin could be defeated by any lesser and lower price, God would be pleased to take it, and not exact the very blood of his very Son. But it was not possible ; and so that enormous ransom had to be paid. It was not possible ; wherein the impossibility lay, we cannot explain ; but this we know, that He who could have supplied his blessed Son with more than twelve legions of angels to rescue him from death, and would have done it at a word—"presently," we read—could not, it seems, do it, consistently with putting away sin : "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it *must* be." And other glimpses there are in holy writ, of some mysterious difficulty attending the forgiveness of sin ; a difficulty, perhaps, arising out of its nature, as considered in relation to the nature of God. Something of this kind seems implied in the language of our Lord to the suspicious Scribes, when they resented his phrase to the sick of the palsy, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." "Whether is *easier*," is his reply, "whether is *easier* to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk." As though he had argued, (so Theophylact interprets the passage), I do not adopt the phrase, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," in order to evade a difficulty, and leave the man where he was, as you may suspect ; and this I will prove, by making his visible

recovery of bodily health accompany his forgiveness ; for it is indeed harder to forgive the sin than to heal the disease ; though you may not think so, because you can see the one, whilst the other you cannot see. Certainly this incident is not calculated to inspire us with a notion that the forgiveness of sins is a trivial matter with God ; a thing of course ; put, as it is at least, on a level with working a signal miracle : but, on the contrary, is well fitted to make us very wary how we commit a sin, when, to ask God to forgive it, seems to be asking no less a favour, than to ask him to cure an inveterate palsy. There is another remarkable expression of our blessed Lord's, recorded in the Gospel of St. John, tending to the same conclusion : " Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in me, the works that I do, shall he do also ; and *greater works* than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." (xiv. 12.) Jesus had healed the sick ; cleansed the leper ; rebuked the winds and the sea, so that there was a calm ; walked on the waters ; raised the dead ; and yet the faithful disciple, when he should be gone, was to do greater works than these. How so ? Because, as it should seem, he should wage war more successfully against sin. Strengthened by that power which he should receive by means of Jesus going to his Father, he should " prick men more to the heart" (Acts ii. 37) ; cause them to cry out with greater vehemence, " Sirs, what shall I do to be saved" (xvi. 30) ; and instead of turning souls from Satan unto God by one or two at a time, and after a ministry of several years numbering only a hundred and twenty that would venture at least to confess the faith, make converts of three thousand at a sermon. (ii. 41.) These, it should appear, according to the language of our Lord, were greater things than the greatest physical miracle

achieved by him. So gigantic an evil was sin; so vast a triumph, the triumph over sin; the conversion of a sinner, a work which drew upon the virtues of the Godhead so much more largely than the re-animation of a corpse. Once more: Jesus having observed that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God; the observation produces the remark from the disciples, "Who then can be saved?" To which Jesus rejoins, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." That is, there is no physical miracle, however inconceivably difficult, however deeply taxing the omnipotence of the Deity, more trying than this moral one of resuscitating a soul smothered in the sins engendered by unscrupulous wealth.

The hints which these passages afford of some hidden difficulty attendant upon the putting away of sin, correspond with the force of the text which gave the occasion to produce them, that it was not *possible* for the cup to pass from Jesus, except he drank it—that no less cost would suffice for the recovery of the world, than his precious death. Nay, as if to make the price paid still more startling, as if to swell our estimate of its amount to a pitch passing all understanding, the Apostle Paul, enveloping it in a mystery, does not scruple to speak of it as the blood *of God*—for I do not hesitate to adopt the received reading of the text, confirmed as it is by the use of the same phrase, or equivalent phrases, in so many of the early Fathers, from the time of Ignatius downwards,—saying, "Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased *with his own blood*." (Acts xx. 28.)

I repeat, then, it is impossible for any person with any consideration in him at all, to bear these facts in mind, and not be struck with the lesson they read us ; that in *sin*, in its nature and essence, there is a *malignity*, such as we can very imperfectly conceive ; that, in the language of the Apostle, there is exceeding sinfulness in sin.

Now having possessed our minds with a notion of sin, thus got at by two approaches ; by observing its character as testified by the system in which we live, and by the word of God ; what manner of men shall we be if we treat it lightly, and make a mock of it ? Scripture, which is always very plain-spoken, tells us, that in so doing we shall be *fools*—"Fools make a mock at sin." For would *he* not be accounted a fool who should cast fire-brands about, and say it was sport, whilst he set his own goods and his neighbours around him in a blaze ? Or, who should make poison his plaything, to the damage of himself and all that are in the house with him ? But when he is meddling with sin, he is meddling with that which is infinitely more desperate than either of these ; and therefore his sporting with it, and making a mock of it, a folly infinitely more foolish. For what folly can be so gross as to jest about that which thus troubles the universe ; which causes all the misery there is in the world ? Who but a fool, a hopeless fool, can joke and banter about a thing, but for which there would be no sorrow or tears amongst us ; no suffering, or sickness, or pain ; no blasted hopes, and broken hearts, and wounded spirits ; no envy, or malice, or ill will ; no severance of friends ; no leading into captivity ; no decay ; and no death ? Is the thing which desolates the world with evils like these a thing to make ourselves merry with ? Why, but for this same sin being

amongst us, should not the figurative language of the prophet hold good already; and the wolf even now dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and the little child lead them; and the sucking child play upon the hole of the asp, and the weaned child put his hand in the cockatrice' den; and none hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain? And is the thing which stands in the way of this blessed consummation of peace on earth, and good-will amongst men, and which alone hinders it, a thing to divert ourselves with, and make a mock of? Or, further, is the thing which actually rendered it necessary that the Son of God should give up the glories of heaven, and humble himself before man's scorn; be buffeted, and spit on, and nailed to a cross between thieves; and pierced by the spear of a remorseless soldier; is the thing which wrought evils like these, matter for pleasantry, shall we think? Is it possible to imagine anything more likely to kindle God's wrath to the very uttermost, than for him to look down from heaven, and see that after he has done and suffered so much to put the sin of man away, man should, on his part, be so dead to all proper sense of it, that he sports with it, instead of mourning over it in sackcloth? Alas! call sin by what names we will; let the tongue of mankind varnish it after what fashion it please; let it be represented as spirit, or mirth, or gaiety, or frolic, or shrewdness, or what you will; it is still what I have described it—neither more nor less than this; even the thing which works in the world all the woe there is in it; and the thing which has caused the blood of God's Son to flow, to abate it. When years have passed over men's heads, and the sorrows and trials of life have sobered them, they

would seldom, I believe, do this ; they would seldom, I trust, then make light of sin in this way : a grey-headed trifler of this class, if such an one we ever meet, is in truth the saddest of all sad sights ; for him to be faltering out a wicked joke with a tongue that has but few more words to utter, before it shall be called on to render its account, and which should spend the interval chiefly in giving vent to confessions of penitence and prayer, is dismal indeed. But with the young, I fear, the case is common. Therefore, I would even venture to put my application, which has hitherto been a general one, and has been directed alike to every age, sex, and station, more closely, most closely, to the young men who form so large a part of the honoured audience I am addressing ; for, possibly, some among them may be exposed to fall before the folly I have been denouncing, owing to circumstances peculiar to their present position. Indeed, it has been chiefly with a view to them that I have drawn the subject of my sermon this day from the Proverbs ; which, besides being the book of Scripture that furnishes the Lessons for the Sundays now passing, is a book most especially calculated to impress the young, those who are entering upon life, with wholesome thoughts. In its very preface it intimates that it speaks to them above all ; its very object professing to be, “to give the young man knowledge and discretion ;” and chapter after chapter opening with the appeal, “My son,” “My son.” For its author had himself known but too well what are the temptations of youth, and had but too dearly paid for the experience he had gained of their bitter fruits. It may well therefore be supposed, that when he uttered the words of my text, he had young men particularly in mind ; that the caution they contain was directed to them above others ; he might

feel that they needed it most of all ; that their years were a snare unto them ; their animal spirits, and anticipation of a long life, likely to betray them into levity. It was a holy man's prayer to God, that he would "teach him to *number his days*, that he might apply his heart unto *wisdom*." As though wisdom, in the scriptural sense, came, under God's blessing, from the contemplation of our speedy departure hence : *folly*, from the contemplation of our protracted stay here. I do indeed believe that, on the whole, a more sober and reverential spirit is abroad among the students of this place than prevailed here years gone by. I see symptoms of this in a greater thirst for ecclesiastical and religious knowledge ; in improved attendance, and more grave demeanour in our college chapels, and in this church ; and in a large increase in the numbers of those who resort to the Table of the blessed Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. Still, where so many are gathered together from all quarters, of every temperament, and brought up under all circumstances, propitious or otherwise, there must be always some who mislead, and some who are misled by them ; and it is not a visionary evil against which the preacher is providing, when he bids you bear ever about you the warning words of the text, that it is "fools who make a mock at sin." Doubtless, some moral courage is needed of you to act on it : a courage which, as it is the highest in character, so is it the last which men acquire. Forestal then its usual date, and be brave to God whilst you are yet in your teens. Be not laughed out of those ancient notions of right and wrong, which you have had from your cradles, by the banter of any new associate. He will, in his heart, only respect you the more for not flinching to maintain them. He will hereafter be the

very man to trust you (having had this proof of your spirit) with the fate and fortunes of those who are most dear to him, scoff at though he may now be : you will be the parties he will seek, when time and its troubles shall have humbled him and brought him to his senses, of whom to make the trustees of his goods, and the guardians of his children when he shall be no more. You may remember an instance of a splendid scoffer who would not, after all, allow the pleasant companions of his clever hours to have the care of the infant daughter whom he loved, but consigned her rather to the superstition of a convent—to that very superstition which had furnished him with food for mirth in the days of his folly. Be not dazzled by the wit of the profane ; a profane jest is the poorest, because the easiest of any. Be not persuaded that it is a mark of genius to be wicked ; the greatest men by far this place of learning has ever known, were men of sober lives and deep religious principle ; men, whose devotional feeling was most keen and delicate ; men, who would have been shocked at the profane ribaldry of a would-be wit. Be not tempted to dissemble the real circumstances of your estate—I touch on this, because I believe the folly of disguising what you are, and to whom you belong, is often here the first step to that deeper folly which makes a mock at sin—Be not tempted, I say, to dissemble the real circumstances of your estate, where they may happen to be not affluent, and to enter into disingenuous rivalry with those above you in means and station, to the damage of your family and friends, who have made sacrifices perhaps to send you here ; not surely with a view that you should truckle to the galling jokes of a thoughtless jester, and be ashamed of the affectionate thrift exercised on your behalf at home ; but in the

hope that you would raise up for yourselves, in this noble field for talent and worth, an honest name; and repay them for their economy by the pride they will feel in seeing you great and good. In seeing you too single-minded; too grateful for the self-denying offices of those who love you; too pious sons, to be jeered out of the fifth commandment, or any other: but capable rather of emulating that generous simplicity of the Patriarch of old, who did not shrink from introducing amongst the firstborn of Egypt, now, through his own virtues, inferior to himself, the very humble father and brothers who belonged to him; and whose occupation was even an abomination to the Egyptians; and who, when that aged parent died, and when in obedience to his dying charge, that he should bury him with his fathers in the cave in Canaan, he carried thither his bones, was so far from feeling ashamed of the modest scenes of his early days—the cradle of his family, which was without wealth or pretensions—that he took along with him, to do honour to the corpse, a retinue of the lords of his adopted land, all the servants of Pharaoh, and the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, with their chariots and horsemen, a very great company; witnesses though they were thus to be of the very homely rock from which he was hewn; but, at the same time, witnesses too of that nobility of soul which, under God, had placed him in the sphere that was naturally his own, and lifted the shepherd's boy to the foot of the throne. Do not imagine that you can form here friendships that will endure, or minister in any way to your promotion in life, by a compromise with sin in any shape. Spurious popularity won amongst your fellows by the smartness of a licentious tongue, or by the affectation of a dare-devil spirit which may chance

to fall in with that of the companions you may be thrown amongst—popularity of this sort soon decays. Confederacies in vice never last; there is nothing cohesive in them. Even among thieves and bandits, it is the morsel of virtue that remains in them unextinguished which enables them to hold together—and nothing else; it is some shred of mutual confidence; some touch of native honour; some remnant of self-restraint; some spark of conscience; some little virtue, in short, which mitigates and neutralises their vice, and binds it together as its alloy. Friendship is far too sacred a thing to be the growth of folly or profaneness: as well might we expect to prepare a glorified body by gluttony and excess: its fostering element is not amidst riot and noise, amidst cups and carousals, amidst impious flights of fancy, and pleasantries about holy things: but in far other scenes. It thrives in the partnership of danger and suffering and toil; in every crisis and catastrophe that calls up real worth and sterling character; amidst the unselfish rivalries of the pursuit of knowledge; in the frank interchange of virtuous thoughts; under the desire of mutual improvement, moral even more than intellectual; in the daily resort to the same sanctuary; in the sympathies excited by common prayer; in the conversation one with another, so ordered, as if you were not only to be pleasant in your lives, but after your deaths not to be divided. It is thus that friends are made; friends that deserve the name; friends that shall survive the short intercourse of this place, though here they may have first met, and though here they may have found so much that ministers to their growth. Create then for yourselves this *lasting* esteem, by suffering no man to despise your youth; as the Apostle again and again enjoins; by letting no man see you guilty of

the youthful follies of which the text speaks. Let nothing tempt you, even in these days of your frolic and your prime, to make light of the things of God. Set a watch over your words, that ye speak not unadvisedly with your lips. With the Psalmist, remember Jerusalem, the Holy City, even in your mirth. Bethink yourselves of the day when every idle word will have to be accounted for; and picture to yourselves the dreadful reverse, which the wise man, whose instruction we have been now pondering, tells us awaits the scoffer, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity, I will *mock* when your fear cometh."

S E R M O N I I .

(Preached at Great St. Mary's, Cambridge, Nov. 16, 1845.)

I TIMOTHY III. 14, 15.

*These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly :
but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest
to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of
the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth.*

TIMOTHY was a disciple in whom St. Paul appears to have placed implicit confidence; one to whom he communicated very freely and fully all his views with respect to founding and fostering the infant Church committed to their charge. He writes of him to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. iv. 17), "For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as *I teach everywhere in every church*"—as though Timothy was well acquainted with his system; and having thus prepared him for a high office, he sets him over the Church of Ephesus; giving him, however, in his new position, still some supplementary directions; or, at least, putting down in writing many of those already in his possession, as to how he was to behave in it. Those directions compose the First Epistle to Timothy, and were to be his guide till St. Paul should come in person, which, sooner or later, he proposed to do. They were to teach him how he ought, in the meanwhile, to proceed in the house of God, i. e. in the Church, which is further described as the pillar and ground, or stay, of the Truth; the basis on which the Truth was to rest; and which it was, therefore, most

needful should be constructed advisedly, discreetly, and according to the counsel of God; as though even the Truth itself required some strong frame-work to uphold and maintain it amongst mankind.

I propose, therefore, in the present sermon, to investigate the construction of this Church which St. Paul advocates; collecting the details of it from the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. I am led to treat of this subject by the circumstance that the ecclesiastical year is about to begin again, and the appointed cycle of our services to renew its round: the period therefore seems convenient for suggesting to you the elementary structure of the Church. I am further led to it, by the consideration that the second lessons of our services are at this time taken from the Epistles to Timothy and Titus; portions of Scripture which turn upon the construction of the Church so greatly; indeed, which supply us with more information upon it than almost all the New Testament besides: the teaching of our Church, therefore, seems now to point to it. And lastly, and above all, I am led to it, because it is evident that ecclesiastical questions are those which now agitate the public mind beyond all others, and are long likely to do so; and that such will hereafter, probably, try the spirits of many who are now before me, when they shall be called to play their parts, in some instances, perhaps, not unimportant ones, in the affairs of their country: the times, therefore, and the audience, prompt me to it. There may, indeed, be a few present who have heard from me elsewhere the substance of the argument I am about to address to you; but, for the reason I have just assigned, I regard it as one to which the attention of the laity may be called with advantage, and especially of the younger laity; whereas the parties with whom I have

had to deal, have probably been none but those who are about to enter into holy orders, or who have already entered. I propose therefore, I say, to profit by the opportunity I have here, of speaking to a large and mixed assembly; and to direct your notice to certain hints which seem to transpire in Scripture, (for they are often little more than hints, and so have need to be drawn out), on the subject of a Church; and to suggest to you whether, even in its earliest form, it was the loose structure which many suppose it to have been; whether it was not speedily put into a state of organization; and did not very soon present a whole body, fitly joined together and compacted. I repeat, I will make Scripture itself, in the first instance, supply the materials of my argument; I will not go *primarily* for information to ecclesiastical history, however near the Apostle's age; that being an authority of which so many are jealous; but to the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles; an authority to which all must bow. At the same time, I do not pretend to deny that the knowledge of this subsequent history will help us greatly to develop these hints, as I suppose them to be, which Scripture affords, and that without it many of these hints would be lost upon us, and escape us unobserved. Just as we are assisted in decyphering the features of a twilight landscape by having seen it in broad day. And, indeed, it appears to me, that a capital defect in modern popular Commentaries on the New Testament is this—that the authors of those Commentaries do not always bring to their work a competent acquaintance with sub-apostolic times; that they are content with making Scripture its own interpreter; which, as far as it can be done is, no doubt, right: but with such a restriction imposed on themselves, they assuredly will not get at all that Scripture contains, and

especially where the ordinances and rites of the Church are concerned. It is impossible not to be frequently struck with the uncereemonious manner in which such commentators will dismiss this interpretation or that (which, probably, does not fall in with the system of theology they have adopted,) of texts of Scripture, as fanciful, and utterly without foundation, where nobody, I think, reasonably imbued with the usages, the phrases, the spirit of the sub-apostolic Church, would entertain a doubt that the discarded exposition, is the sound and genuine one; and the exposition, substituted for it with so much confidence and pretension, wholly beside the mark, and out of all keeping with the circumstances and the times. Our Church, if we would but submit to be guided by her, would in this, as in other matters, lead us right. "Will you be diligent," is one of the questions put by the bishop to the candidate for imposition of hands; "Will you be diligent in prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such *studies as help to the knowledge of the same?*" To which he answers, that he will. And what our Church intends by those studies, is clear, as well from other indications, as from her own express language in the preface to the Ordination service, which might seem meant for a comment on this question: "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scriptures, and *ancient authors*, that from the Apostle's time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church," &c. And, accordingly, Bishop Pearson, one of the very foremost of our divines, in the Preface to his Exposition of the Creed, one of the glories of our Theology, speaks of the writings of the ancient fathers, and the history of the Church, as amongst "those great advantages towards a right perception of the Christian religion." Wherefore, if in what I am

about to say I shall seem to any to discern features of an organized Church in passages of Scripture where they can see none, or at best but faint traces of them—as I shall infallibly appear to do to persons whose reading has not happened to lie in the direction I have pointed to—who have indeed, perhaps, been diligent in reading the Holy Scriptures, but not in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same; I must entreat them to suspend their judgment till they shall have had time to examine the structure and character of the Church, as it existed immediately after the Apostles' days; such information, I submit, helping to the sense of Scripture, and it is the *sense* of Scripture that is Scripture; and this done, if they still charge me with drawing great conclusions from slender premises, I shall be no longer in a condition to think that they charge me inconsiderately. And after all, in what I am about to offer to you, I do not presume to speak dogmatically; the evidence (limited as I propose it to be) does not admit of it: but simply to act in the spirit of the Bereans, and in all sincerity search the Scriptures, *whether* these things are so. Acts xvii. 11.

The communications which our blessed Saviour held with his disciples at intervals, during the forty days which he remained upon earth after his Resurrection, are not recorded by the Evangelists in any detail. We could scarcely however doubt, even if we had no intimation whatever to that effect, that much of his occupation during that period would be, to unfold to them subjects which had been reserved during his previous ministry, and when the season was not yet ripe for their disclosure, and especially the construction and discipline of the Church now about to be established. Was it for God, under the former dispensation, to commune *forty*

days (Exod. xxiv. 18,) with Moses, the minister appointed by him to carry it into execution, and so minutely, as to proceed even to the shape and material of the altar, and of the tabernacle, the measure of the courts, and the vesture of the priests: and shall Jesus, the self-same Being under the Second Dispensation, pass the same period, *forty* days, in communication with his disciples, the ministers appointed to carry this new Covenant into act, and yet be altogether silent with respect to the practical details by which it was to be done? For, can any thing be conceived more needful at such a moment than instruction upon this most difficult and intricate of questions; a moment, when Jesus was telling his disciples that they were to be witnesses unto him, "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth?" (Acts i. 8.) Surely some specific directions would be wanted for their guidance in carrying so vast a plan as this into effect—they, twelve peasants and fishermen. And, accordingly, we are actually told thus much, that during these forty days Jesus was "speaking of the things pertaining unto the *kingdom of God*." (Acts i. 3.) What more likely than that amongst them were the means by which the Christian religion, for in that sense "the kingdom of God" is often used, might be established in the world? as he then gave them their commission, withheld till then (for it had been only promised before, "and I *will give* unto thee the keys," Matt. xvi. 19), in the words still used at the consecration of our priests, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John xx. 22, 23.)

And none can deny, however much they may dispute the greater or less distinctness with which the

structure of the Church can be traced in the Acts and Epistles ; none can deny that after this period, whatever might have been the cause, the proceedings of the apostles became much more *systematic* than they were before ; that there is much more of *plan* and *method* observed in reducing the world to the gospel after our Lord's ascension, than before his crucifixion ; much more of definite arrangement as to persons, places, and times ; much more mechanism, if I may so speak, employed by St. Paul in founding his Churches, than by any of the disciples when they were sent to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel : nay, that an ecclesiastical nomenclature now begins to shew itself, wholly unused in the gospel narrative ; a nomenclature too, becoming somewhat more enlarged as we advance in the date of the sacred documents which announce it.

1. The first feature then of an organized Church, which I shall name, is a *fixed place* of worship, of which traces may now be discovered : “ And when they were come in, they went up into *an* upper room, where abode both Peter and James, &c.” (Acts i. 13.) This was for prayer and supplication—perhaps into ‘*the* upper room,’ (τὸ ὑπερῶν), a correction similar to that applied by Dr. Middleton to the second verse of the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew, “ so that he went into *a* ship, and sat ;” not into *a* ship, but ‘*the* ship’ (εἰς τὸ πλῆιον) ; i. e. into a particular ship, which, as appears from a passage in St. Mark (iii. 9), constantly waited on Jesus, and seems to have belonged to Simon. (Luke v. 3.) In like manner then, in this case the disciples went into ‘*the* upper room,’ i. e. the room where the apostles and their followers had now repeatedly assembled for social worship. Perhaps the same which was first consecrated by the original institution of the Eucharist in it, “ the large upper room”

of St. Luke (*ἀνῳγρον μέγα*, Luke xxii. 12, here without the article, being the first time it is mentioned.) The same in which, three days after, on the evening of Easter Day, the disciples met with closed doors. (John xx. 19.) The same in which they were again gathered together on the Sunday following, “after eight days again his disciples were *within*,” (nothing said more definite) “then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you” (John xx. 26); the language of the Evangelist quite calculated to convey the impression that this room was the appointed place of resort for purposes of devotion. The same of which the presence of God more fully took possession when “the sound from heaven filled all the house” (Acts ii. 2) on the day of Pentecost; even as the glory of the Lord “filled the house” which Solomon built to God, on the day of dedication (2 Chron. vii. 1),—nearly the same words applied to both. The same conclusion, viz. that there were fixed and well-known places of worship, to which their own congregations repaired, so early as the Apostles’ times, has been further deduced from those several salutations of St. Paul, “Salute such an one, and the *Church* in *his house* :” thus he speaks of the church in the house of Philemon (i. 2); of the church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla, when they were at Rome (Rom. xvi. 3, 5); and again, of the church in their house, when they had removed to Ephesus (1 Cor. xvi. 19). The fact which I am attempting to establish from these several texts, seems further confirmed by the distinction already perhaps drawn between a House and Church, in the eleventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians : “Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the *Church* of God?” Is the Church the place to take your profane meals in? have ye not ordi-

nary dwellings of your own better fitted for such scenes¹? I am not at liberty, confining the evidence as I propose primarily to Scripture, to do more than barely recal to your remembrance, by way of illustration of Scripture, the clear proof some of the very earliest fathers afford, of the places of Christian worship in their days being fixed; how Clemens Romanus, actually the contemporary of the Apostles, when enforcing upon the Corinthians the observance of order in their Church, reminds them that “it was not *every where* that the continual sacrifice, and prayers, and sin-offerings, and trespass-offerings, had been offered, but in *Jerusalem only*; and there, not in *every place*, but at the altar before the Temple” (§ 41); and how Justin, no very long time after, expressly tells us that on the Sunday all assembled at the *same place*, (ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ), where the service of the day, such as he describes it, was proceeded with (Apol. i. § 67). And I may be permitted to say, that the existence of regular places of worship, however humble and unobtrusive as yet, is the more readily to be admitted, from its not standing *alone* in the proof I am establishing; but being one of several elements of an organized Church, more of which I am about to set before you.

2. For, in the next place, there seems to have been already a certain *order* and attention to *rites*, settled in these Churches; “One who blessed with the spirit” was there; probably one of the spiritual persons, πνεύματικοί, of Gal. vi. 1; and one who was distinguished from him by occupying “the room of the unlearned,” (or laic, τοῦ ἰδιώτου, so the Fathers, and Hooker after them, understood it), “and saying, Amen,” to the other’s blessing. (1 Cor. xiv. 16.) The men were to be bare-headed when assembled in this Church; the women, on the other

¹ See Mede, Discourse on 1 Cor. xi. 22.

hand, were to be covered (1 Cor. xi. 5): and these regulations, as well as another with respect to the more decent celebration of the Lord's Supper, St. Paul ushers in by a short preface touching the observance of ordinances which he had laid down; and again, he closes his injunctions, on the same occasion, by saying, that the rest he would set in order when he came (v. 34), i. e. other matters touching religious observances; for that is the subject on which he is speaking. There was a regular economy of seats, the rich having the upper, the poor the lower, and a man with a gold ring and goodly apparel received into the Church with such distinction as was made matter of rebuke. (James ii. 2.) For that the 'Assembly,' of St. James, who furnishes us with these particulars, was the congregation of Christians, and not the synagogue of Jews, is obvious from the whole tenor of the Epistle¹.

3. Nor are there, perhaps, wanting hints of a *regular Service*, in which this congregation of Christians partook. The several and successive parts of this service have been supposed to be expressed in the forty-second verse of the second chapter of the Acts², 'They continued stedfastly (1) in *the doctrine of the Apostles*,' i. e., hearing and attending to the things spoken of them; (2) and in *the communion*, (τῇ κοινωνίᾳ), i. e., contributing to the offertory; the offertory being a symbol of fellowship in the service of Sunday already established under apostolic

¹ Some have thought that a court of justice might be meant by the word συναγωγή; but though courts appear to have been held in the Jewish synagogues, it is difficult to suppose that the Christians (and the rebuke is here addressed to them) had at that time any courts of their own—indeed, we know that St. Paul reproached the Christians with taking their causes before "the unjust." 1 Cor. vi. 1.

² ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ, καὶ τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου, καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς.

sanction, and, as we shall see presently, too important a one to be overlooked in any summary, however brief, of that service; "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. xvi. 2); having gathered together the sum he could spare during the week, let him bring it as an offering to the Church on Sunday; for otherwise, why should any mention of Sunday have been made? And the same rule, the Apostle adds, he had laid down for the Churches of Galatia (1 Cor. xvi. 1); the term *κοινωνία*, as it is well known, being repeatedly used in Scripture for a charitable contribution. (3) In *the* breaking of *the* bread; i. e. participating in the holy Eucharist, the very pivot of all primitive worship. (4) And in *the* prayers, i. e. such prayers as appertained to the public worship of the Church, and were known: persons who had received a fixed form of prayer from their Lord himself, and who had always shared in such forms as Jewish worshippers, not being unlikely to adopt others of their own. And, indeed, in one of the injunctions which St. Paul gives to Timothy, with respect to congregational devotions—"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications (*δεήσεις*), prayers (*προσευχάς*), intercessions (*ἐντεύξεις*), and giving of thanks (*εὐχαριστίας*), be made for all men" (1 Tim. ii. 1)—the distinction of terms has been thought to indicate the several divisions into which public addresses to the Deity then systematically fell; in which evils were deprecated, blessings besought, charities to others invoked, mercies acknowledged. At all events, the introduction of the article in each clause of the Greek in the passage of the Acts we are considering, is remarkable, and seems to point to incidents familiar to the writer's mind, and to the minds of those he was in the first instance addressing. In the plan I am pursuing I

cannot fully avail myself of the testimony of sub-apostolic authors on this point any more than on the other. I may however remind you, as before, how entirely the description Justin Martyr gives us of the Sunday service of the Christians, accords with the several particulars of it here presented to us; how many are the glimpses of a form of prayer existing in the Church which we find in others of the earliest fathers, as well as in him, of which I shall have other occasion to give proof; and how extreme a difficulty there would have been in preserving unity of doctrine in the universal Church (of which it ever was most jealous) without it. And, indeed, of a *Creed*, to be professed at baptism—some short, perhaps, but as it should seem, settled formulary—we have so many intimations in Scripture, that of that element of worship we can hardly doubt; the apostle Paul appearing frequently to refer to it as a memento to the Christian; even as our Church, in her Office for the Visitation of the Sick, exhorts the sick man, in the name of God, to remember the profession which he made to God at his baptism; and then proceeds to rehearse to him the creed. “But God be thanked,” says the Apostle, “that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that *form of doctrine* (τύπον διδαχῆς) which was delivered you”—or unto which ye were delivered, (Rom. vi. 17,) i. e. when you were baptized; for it is on baptism that the whole previous part of the chapter turns. To the same compendium of faith, the recollection of which would guard the Christian from being led astray by heretical opinions, we may probably ascribe another text in the Epistle to the Romans (xvi. 17), “Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the *doctrine which ye have learned*” (τὴν διδαχὴν): he does not say,

observes one of the old commentators, which I have taught, but, which ye *have learned*; thus intimating to them, that they ought to abide in the faith which they had received already. To the same, the deposit, the παρακαταθήκη, which Timothy was exhorted to keep in defiance of “profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called” (1 Tim. vi. 20.) To the same, the “*form of sound words*” (ὑποτύπωσις ὑγιαινόντων λόγων) which Timothy was again exhorted to hold fast (2 Tim. i. 13.) To the same, “*the same rule*” (ὁ αὐτὸς κανὼν), by which the Philippians were to walk (Philip. iii. 16.) To the same, the “first principles of the oracles of God,” (Hebr. v. 12), which the Hebrew Christians had lost sight of. To the same, the profession of faith, which these same Hebrews were to cleave to: “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies *washed with pure water*. Let us hold fast the *profession of our faith* without wavering,” (Hebr. x. 22, 23.) (ὁμολογία); the confession made when we were washed with pure water at baptism, to which sacrament the passage appertains. To the same, ‘the proportion of faith;’ “Let us prophesy according to the *proportion of faith*” (κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως) (Rom. xii. 6.); if it be our province to expound the doctrine of the gospel, let our exposition be in harmony with the received symbol of the Church; and in this sense Bishop Jeremy Taylor understands it¹. A formulary this, of which we are speaking, that by the time of Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clemens, had certainly and beyond all doubt, become as established and well known as that we now have is at present; sometimes called—almost in

¹ See his second Sermon on Titus ii. 7, the Minister’s duty in life and doctrine.

the very phrases we have already seen used in Scripture, and so far helping to fix those phrases to the sense I have said—"the Rule of the Truth" (Irenæus, i. c. 9. § 4); sometimes "the Christian Confession" (Clem. Strom. vii. § 15, p. 887); sometimes "The Rule of Faith" (Tertull. de Præscript. § 13. Adv. Prax. § 2); and always used at baptism. The existence of some such simple primitive symbol seems further alluded to in a passage of the First Epistle of St. Peter (iii. 21), where of Baptism it is said that it now saves us, "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the *answer* (ἐπερώτημα) of a good conscience towards God." Why *answer*? but in reference to the interrogatories then put as they are now put to the party to be baptised—so Schleusner indeed himself explains it, with abundant evidence in sub-apostolic times to support him—one of which was as to the articles of his faith; the baptism being effectual when the true faith was professed in a *good conscience*, and with the full intention of keeping it. And it is obvious that some such formulary, briefly comprising the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, would be the more needful, when as yet there was no *canon* of Scripture to appeal to, and when there was a constant call for some summary of this kind to be brought before the minds of Christian converts in the early process of catechising.

4. Again; that there were *ministers* in this Church, men set apart expressly for the performance of holy functions, and distinct from the body of Christians in general, there are (I must not in this instance say *hints*, in the Acts and Epistles, but) *evidence*; *evidence* indisputable, that however overwhelming was the harvest, it was not for every man who felt or fancied or feigned he could work in it to advantage, to put his ready sickle thereto; but for certain labourers only, whom the Lord

should *send*; send, by an overt and ceremonial act, conveying, and sanctioning, and consecrating the mission. Such act, being on the one side, after competent examination of the party, under the recollection that some men's sins are not open beforehand (1 Tim. v. 24), *imposition of hands* by the authorities to whom it belonged, by St. Paul himself, e. g. and the Presbyters as his assessors (2 Tim. i. 6; 1 Tim. iv. 14). Such act being, on the other side, *certain professions* and solemn promises, made in the face of the congregation—"a good profession professed before many witnesses" (1 Tim. vi. 12); for though this passage may undoubtedly refer to the vows of baptism, yet forasmuch as the Epistle of which it forms a part is addressed to Timothy in his character of a *minister*, the interpretation which assigns these words to his ordination-vow seems the more probable. But I feel that I need hardly do more than remind you of this feature, at least, of the primitive Church, to obtain your assent to the fact. We have bishops, presbyters, deacons, repeatedly spoken of—names in the sense here used, unknown to the phraseology of the gospels—unknown till after the time when Jesus had breathed on the disciples, and said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John xx. 23); till after he had said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) I say it was not permitted any man to be a volunteer, and to serve God in the ministry without apostolical appointment. Timothy was to

“lay hands suddenly on no man,” nor “make himself partaker of other men’s sins” (1 Tim. v. 22). Therefore he was the *inlet* through which the access to the ministry of the Church of Ephesus necessarily lay; for how would his scrupulosity save that Church from unworthy pastors, if the effectual check did not rest with him? if any man might set up for himself as a teacher? or, if the presbyters, whom he was put in a condition to rebuke, could open the doors of the ministry without him, and in spite of him, as wide as they pleased (1 Tim. v. 1)? Or how, on any other supposition, would he have the power of securing for his successors, “faithful men,” who should in their turn teach others also the things which he had himself heard from St. Paul, as that apostle enjoins him to do (2 Tim. ii. 2)? Titus was left in Crete, to set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain presbyters in every city, as Paul had appointed him (Tit. i. 5): but how could he put the Church in Crete to rights, unless he had a commission superior to the other clergy? It was not that he had entered upon an island utterly unimbued with Christianity. Christianity had been planted there long before Titus was left in it. At the day of Pentecost there were “*Cretes* and Arabians” present (Acts ii. 11). St. Paul had himself been engaged in regulating the Church of Crete before Titus was entrusted with it alone; “*I left thee in Crete,*” says he, not to found the Church there in the first instance, but to perfect it; to set in order the things that were wanting, (*ἵνα τὰ λείποντα ἐπιδιορθώσῃ*, Tit. i. 5), the labour supplemental to what he had done himself; and to “ordain elders in every city,” or establish them, city by city, wherever there were Christian congregations; St. Paul himself, probably, not having had time to ordain all those now required, or

to locate them to most advantage. Why were not any of these elders then competent to ordain others for the cities where as yet they were lacking, and to establish discipline and regularity where it was yet unknown or relaxed? I mean, by what I am saying, to show, without very closely arguing the Episcopal question, what a system of organization, of rule, of duty and privilege, was already framed for the purpose of administering the powers of the Church. It may be that the terms bishop and presbyter are sometimes convertible in the language of the New Testament; but it is clear, nevertheless, that call the priesthood by what names you will, there were certain most important functions, such as ordination, and censure, attaching to some individuals of this class, which did not attach to others; the parties to whom these superior rights belonged, perfectly known; and that very soon too names were assigned them as exclusive as their duties; the term angel being, by the time of the date of the Revelations, one such title; and, probably, by the same date, that of bishop, another. For as the Apostles died away, (*they*, the bishops or superior order whilst they lived) the appellations bishop and presbyter seem to have become by degrees no longer convertible; but it being thought presumptuous to perpetuate the name of *Apostles*, and some other name being wanted to supply the place of this, it was agreed to distinguish henceforward between the name of bishop and presbyter, hitherto confounded; the former being assigned to the first order of priests, to those who stood in the place of the *Apostles*—for bishops are constantly called in all Christian antiquity, successors of the *Apostles* (διάδοχοι τῶν Ἀποστόλων), not successors of the *Presbyters*; though no longer, from a sense of modesty, assuming the title of *Apostles*;—whilst the latter name

was assigned to the second order of priests, who henceforward were to be known by no other designation. And this is the account of the proceeding furnished by Theodoret¹.

5. Nor is this all. In further evidence of the systematic process by which the Church was governed, there was even now practised a well-organized method of *Promotion* in the ranks of the ministry. No *novice* was to be made a bishop (1 Tim. iii. 6). The Bishop was to be an approved and experienced man in the Church, who had exercised lower offices in it to advantage. "For they that have used the office of a deacon well," is the direction, were to "purchase to themselves a good degree," (13) βαθμὸν καλὸν—βαθμὸς being subsequently the canonical term for an order in the ministry²—they were to have a higher rank, that of presbyter or bishop eventually appointed them. And it would seem that when St. Paul is speaking of the Church in the chapter from which I am drawing my present remarks, he understands that body of Christians amongst whom the sacraments and functions of the Church were administered by these different grades of clergy; for he adds, after these instructions relating to the election and treatment of bishops and deacons, the words of my text, "These things write I unto thee;" (i. e. these things touching ministers of the Church;) "hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself (or proceed) in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 14, 15): the context implying that the Church was that body

¹ On 1 Tim. iii., quoted by Bp. Pearson in his *Vind. Ignat.*, Part II. p. 174. See also *Remarks*, &c. by Phileteuth. Lips. xxxv.

² See Council of Ephes. Canon i. Routh, *Script. Eccles.* p. 390.

of which he had just been speaking, and consequently that in which there were these bishops and deacons.

6. Furthermore. So orderly were the arrangements of this Primitive Church, that if a member, whether ecclesiastical or lay, travelled to a distant country, and there proposed to join himself to the Church of the place, he carried with him from his own Church 'letters commendatory,' ἐπιστολὰς συστατικὰς,—this again the future canonical term for such letters. "Need we," says the Apostle, in allusion to this custom when writing to the Corinthians, "need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?" (2 Cor. iii. 1): the intention of such letters being to make the party known to the local Church he was to join; that if an ecclesiastie, he might be permitted to perform ecclesiastical functions in that Church; or if a mere layman, he might be certified as a baptised Christian of good report, under no sentence of excommunication, (for already was there discipline enough in the Church, as we know from the case of the incestuous person, to exercise this form), and so be received by the congregation he was going amongst without suspicion¹. Then we have actually instances of the use of these letters: thus, when Apollos was about to pass from Ephesus to Achaia, the brethren of Ephesus "wrote, exhorting the disciples (of Achaia) to receive him"—who upon the strength of that letter did receive him, and helped him much (Acts xviii. 26, 27). So again, when the collection from the Church of Corinth for the poor Christians of Judæa was to be despatched, Paul undertook to send it to Jerusalem by such persons as the Church of Corinth should approve by *their letters*; or if we take another version of the passage, St. Paul

¹ See *Canons of the Apostles*, xii. and xxxiii.

would give these persons, whom they should choose, *letters commendatory* to the Church of Jerusalem himself. (1 Cor. xvi. 3.) And when Phœbe, a deaconess in the Church of Cenchrea, was for the same reason going to Rome, St. Paul gave her a letter commendatory to the Church of Rome, in a sentence of his Epistle to that Church, “I commend (συνίστημι) unto you Phœbe our sister, which is a servant (διάκονον) of the Church which is at Cenchrea” (Rom. xvi. 1). Possibly, indeed, she was the bearer of a more formal document to this effect from the Apostle, of which this was the announcement.

7. Moreover a further measure of the same, not local, but universal character as the last, and intended, like that, to promote the unity of the Church catholic throughout the world, is that reported in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, a prototype of future *General Councils*; when, upon a controversy arising in a branch of the Church on the subject of circumcision—a controversy threatening a convulsion in it—the question was submitted to the Synod of apostles and elders at Jerusalem, under the presidency of James the bishop of that place; and after debate and much disputing, a decree in due form was drawn up and dispatched, first to the Church where the controversy originated (ver. 23); and afterwards, it was delivered to be kept through the cities, as the ordinance of the Apostles and Elders which were at Jerusalem (xvi. 4).

It is not easy, I think, to read details of this kind, without being convinced that the primitive Church, as I have said, was very early indeed an organized body, and that its operations were carried on, not in the desultory and extempore manner many seem to suppose, but with all the force of confederacy and combination.

8. There is but one point more to which I shall

advert, in proof of the proposition I have been bringing before you to day—a point, however, of much importance in illustrating the principle of organization to have been, as I have contended, dominant even in the primitive Church—it is the *Fiscal Question*; the fund out of which the expenses of the Church were discharged: for surely nothing could try the strength of the bonds by which the system was held together more forcibly than this. We have seen that there was certainly an offertory on the Sunday; that it probably formed so stated and regular a part of the service, as to be one of several main features of that service, as described in the Second chapter of the Acts (ver. 42); and we shall further find, by collecting the scattered details relating to this subject which turn up in the course of the Acts and Epistles, that the due regulation of this sacred exchequer was a matter of much attention and care with the early Church; that it enters very largely into its history. And here we may remark once more, the progress the Church had made towards an established and consistent form, since the day when the disciples were taught to “provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass, in their purses” (Matt. x. 10), but to live as it were from hand to mouth—a transition to which our Lord’s words shortly before his death may be thought perhaps to point, “but *now* (ἀλλὰ νῦν) he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise his scrip” (Luke xxii. 36). This fund, contributed in the face of the assembly on the Sunday, was committed to the rulers of the Church, in the first instance, to be dedicated by them to God. The offering which Ananias and Sapphira brought was laid by them at the Apostles’ feet (Acts v. 2); and indeed so were the offerings of the whole congregation (iv. 35). The administration of it, in its minute details, it is not to be expected of me to enter into, limited as I am to

Scripture for my field ; but “distribution was made of it,” in the case just named, we are told, “unto every man according as he had need” (v. 35). And when, by a stretch of kindness extending in its effects beyond the bounds of their own local church, the Church of Antioch sent help to the brethren of Judæa, it was to the *Elders* of the Church of Jerusalem that the sum and its application seems to have been entrusted (Acts xi. 30). Out of this fund the clergy were maintained ; and accordingly, when St. Paul waves his support from it, as he does from reasons of expediency in the instance of Corinth, he expresses himself in a manner which leads us to conclude that he considered such maintenance a *right*, and not an alms ; and a right which the clergy availed themselves of universally ; as indeed how could they help it ? “Or I *only* and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working ?” (1 Cor. ix. 6) ; i. e. must we two be the exceptions to the general practice, and not be at liberty to live by the Gospel, as do others, but must preach it, and work for our bread nevertheless at some mechanical trade ? Nay, St. Paul did receive his salary from *other* Churches, for says he, in a half-reproach to the Corinthians, “I robbed other Churches, taking *wages* of them to do you service” (2 Cor. xi. 8) ; the expression a remarkable one, *wages*, (ὀψώνιον, or soldier’s pay), as though a sum not altogether arbitrary. And hence the caution necessary in selecting the ministers of the Church, lest having an ample provision for their wants furnished them from this fund, (for so it should seem they had), men should be tempted to enter the ministry for no other purpose, or at least for no purpose so prominently, as to throw themselves upon it. “Feed the flock of God which is among you,” says St Peter to the Elders, “taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly ; not *for filthy lucre*,

but of a ready mind" (1 Pet. v. 2). Hence, on the other hand, the recommendation to pay the zealous and active minister liberally out of this same fund—for such would seem to be the true meaning of the words of the Apostle to Timothy (1 Tim. v. 17), even as the ancient commentators explain them, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of *double honour*" (διπλῆς τιμῆς)¹—a double *portion*—double pay; the word τιμὴ being perpetually used in the New Testament (as we are all aware) in a pecuniary sense; the phrase 'double' not, perhaps, here to be taken literally; but being borrowed from the right of the first-born, to be considered as significant of a bountiful maintenance to be supplied to praiseworthy ministers. For unless we assign to the passage this meaning, how does it connect with the subsequent reasoning of the Apostle, who produces the parallel case of the ox which was not to be muzzled when it trod out the corn? *honour* is evidently not the question, but *food*—a maintenance (v. 18): a precedent, that of the ox, which he also uses in another of his Epistles, where he is *clearly* engaged in enforcing the claim of the minister to a maintenance; and where the argument therefrom seems to clench the sense which has been given to the text before us (1 Cor. ix. 9). Nor need we be surprised at the call for such an increase of stipend, where the active duties of an elder, or a bishop probably, often imposed upon them travelling expenses to a considerable amount, and certainly brought them into close contact with much poverty; and to mitigate which drain on them, no doubt, the virtue of *hospitality* was so strongly urged on the more opulent Christians, both in the New Testament and in the writings of the earliest Fathers. It is still with a reference to this

¹ See Mede also, Discourse xix. What is meant by 'double honour'?

fund, and the protection of it from abuse, that we find such rigorous regulations laid down with respect to the admission of widows upon the list of alms-women of the Church : “ *Honour* (τίμα) widows that are widows indeed” (1 Tim. v. 3); i. e. provide for such as have no other means of support, and are of good character, handsomely ; τιμάω here used in the same sense as τιμῇ before was¹. “ But if any widow have children or nephews, let *them* learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents” (v. 4); “ But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith” (v. 8); “ Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man” (ver. 9). These, together with many other minute injunctions on the same subject, which we meet with in the Epistles, and especially in those of St. Paul, all serve to shew, as I said, the care with which the Church’s exchequer was managed ; the checks that were directed to control it ; and (to bring the matter to bear on the argument I am all along pursuing) the system of organization which obtained even in the most primitive Church. For what can argue the vigour of the system more, than that all this should have been achieved without the least assistance from the law of the land ? And on a review of the business in detail which would accrue to an Apostle whose lot it was to keep in order all the mechanism newly established, which I have been endeavouring to develop, shall we wonder that St. Paul, (who does appear to have employed others to *write* his letters), shall we wonder, I say, that St. Paul should have added, as the climax of all his sufferings, that which came upon him daily, the care of all the Churches, or, as the Greek has it more emphatically, ἡ ἐπισύστα-

¹ And as it is used Matt. xv. 5, 6.

σις, the concurrence of troubles which assailed him; ἡ μέριμνα, the anxiety, the solicitude, which this charge devolved on him (2 Cor. xi. 28).

It is obvious that this sketch of the structure of the Primitive Church, drawn, be it remembered, from the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles alone, is far from complete: it does not pretend to realise more than some of its main features; but those features are such as bespeak much more of a *system* to have been settled than I have the means (limiting myself to the authority I have done) of bringing to proof: they are such features too as are indicative of the nature of that system, even where positive evidence of the kind I want may fail. And you will bear in mind that, with regard to some of the leading *doctrines* of the Church, the case is similar: they are only to be got at by inference, and by making the most of such scattered hints as Scripture affords, and combining them into a whole. It appears to be a part of God's plan to deal out his Revelation on this principle: there is no *system* of *theology*, any more than a system of *Church-government* and *ritual*, in the New Testament. We have to get at the construction of both the one and the other for ourselves, with such helps as God has provided us; his purpose being, perhaps, to try who is the *wise* servant, by seeing how he acts under instructions not altogether definite.

Moreover there may be one or other particular in this combination of evidence less clear and cogent than the rest; but it will in every case find readiest acceptance with those (as I have already said) whose minds are best prepared for it by the study of sub-apostolic customs and times. This study, though promoted as we have seen by our Church, and zealously prosecuted by its greatest luminaries, has, until of late years, been so thoroughly

superseded in this country, that we are now hard to be persuaded upon points of which our forefathers (I mean, of course, those who lived since the Reformation) never entertained a doubt.

Still I appeal with some confidence to all, even to those whose studies may not have been turned to the channel of antiquity, and who are only to be reached through the actual Scriptures, but who, as being here, are men of thoughtful minds, and anxious for the truth, whether the Church I have thus unfolded out of the Acts and the Epistles, does not bear the marks of being an organized body, or at least, one approaching as rapidly as circumstances would admit, even during the lives of the Apostles, to a state of organization, and of peculiar organization; whether it does not, in short, represent in its main features the structure of that Church which at length took possession of the world; the mechanism (so to speak) becoming somewhat more complex, as the complex relations of society became more involved in it; even as its creeds became more complex, as the imaginations of men sought out many inventions. Its movements, too, I will add, gradually, but grossly, impeded and deranged by the rust and defilements which in tract of years had gathered about it, and which absolutely required to be removed; and which were removed in this kingdom by wise and judicious workmen, (had but that sufficed!) but workmen who would never have dared, like those who unhappily succeeded them in the task, to break the structure itself utterly up, and then call the disorderly ruin to which they had reduced it, the Church of the Apostles, the Primitive Church—destroying that integrity in it which had been from the first, and which was to be to the end of time. Wherefore, to come briefly to the conclusion

at which I have been aiming in this Sermon, it is not, I submit, by relaxing all the bands which have united the Church as one whole together, and dissolving it into an elemental strife of rival sects and sentiments, that we are making it the Church of St. Paul and St. Peter, of St. James and St. John, or that we shall thus qualify it to carry on a successful conflict with the confederate powers of ignorance and self-conceit, of covetousness and pride, of luxury and discontent, of dissent and popery, which it is now called to encounter and subdue, even in our own empire, and at our own doors; but rather that we shall do so, by taking every fair opportunity (I regard this, in my own case, to be one) of prudently bracing up that which may have become feeble and slack in it; of promoting its force, by throwing our own mite, whatever it may be, into the treasury of its strength; by steadily keeping to its ranks, though we may be thereby lost to observation; and contending against sin under its banner, instead of carrying the warfare on on our own account, and on principles independent of it. So shall we enable it, under God's blessing, which is pledged to go along with it to the last, to make itself more *felt* for good, whether in the heart of our country, and amidst the dense and vicious masses of our manufacturing and mining population; or at the extremities of our vast possessions, whither our poor have been hitherto driven out, not from the face of the earth only, but from the face of God too, as if the curse of Cain was upon them as well as that of poverty; even as at first, when firm, consolidated, and compact, it made its impression on a world yet more sunk in inveterate sin than our own, and caused, under Christ, Satan to fall from heaven as lightning. For experience, I think, has shewn that desultory and uncombined efforts, to say

nothing more, would not reach the cause in either case—however zealously and honestly made—as though the truth could not effectually establish itself, where the pillar and ground of it was defective. In spite of such efforts, it is, I fear, indisputable that the religious condition of a large portion of the working classes at home, who have escaped from the grasp of the Church by reason of their numbers, is deplorable; no man can live amongst them, or on the borders of those districts where they are congregated, without the fact being forced on him. Nor is it possible to read the reports of our efforts to carry the Cross through our colonies, and the heathen lands connected with them—reports full of the deepest interest—without seeing how feeble those efforts prove, how sluggish their success, compared with the results of such as are conducted (as they now more frequently are) under the systematic influence of a Church one and undivided; where there is due superintendence and due subordination; undistracted counsels and undisputed laws; the sympathies of a vast body of Christians brought to bear on any given spot, however remote, however savage; creeds, forms of prayer, sacramental offices throughout the whole body identical; and in short, Jerusalem built as a city which is at unity in itself.

SERMON III.

(Preached at Great St. Mary's, Cambridge, Nov. 23, 1845.)

ACTS IV. 31, 32.

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed was of one heart and of one soul.

THE early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles are principally occupied in recording the tokens of that wonderful life and energy which was manifested in the Church after Jesus had been glorified and the Holy Ghost consequently given (John vii. 39). But amongst the many extraordinary benefits and blessings, which are there described as showered down upon mankind, at once the fruits of that large efflux of the Spirit, and the means of its operation to the further extension of the Church, nothing is more remarkable than the *Unity* it shed abroad in that band of brothers: unity in word and deed, in devotion and in duty. We read that after that first famous sermon of St. Peter, when those three thousand souls were added to the disciples, and when the promise of the Lord was accordingly fulfilled, that on that Rock, even on St. Peter, he would build his Church,—I say, we read that after that famous sermon, these converts, differing, no doubt, as they did in their tastes and feelings, by nature and habit, henceforward one and all “continued stedfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers”—that “they con-

tinued daily with one accord (*ὁμοθυμαδόν*) in the temple; and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat in gladness and singleness of heart.”—And we further read, that after the bold encounter of Peter and John with the rulers and elders and scribes, a little later, and their escape from it not without risk, when they returned to their company, and reported all that had been said and done unto them, they all “*with one accord* (still *ὁμοθυμαδόν*) lifted up their *voice* to God” in a hymn of exaltation and thanksgiving; and in the midst of his description of that sublime scene which ensued, when the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, the Evangelist does not fail still to tell us, (for what more amazing thing could he speak of in a world like ours?) that “the multitude of them that believed were of *one heart and of one soul*.” Such was an effect, a powerful effect, an effect not yielding in magnitude to that of the multiplication of tongues or the cure of diseases, of this original outpouring of the Spirit on the infant Church—*unity*—“one heart, one soul,”—the first of gifts, of all the good ones which our Saviour’s ascension up on high won for us; that gift which did more perhaps to enlarge Christ’s Church upon earth, than all the sensible miracles by which it was guaranteed to be God’s own.—“How they love one another, these Christians,” was a reflexion that was not lost even upon a world of heathens; for heathens as they were, they were still men; and this example drew them by the cords of a man.

Brethren! I cannot be wrong in directing your minds to this great feature of the Primitive Church; in calling you, in these days of division, to the contemplation of that holy and heavenly principle; and in offering

to you, with a view to promote it amongst ourselves, some suggestions, which, under the favour of Him whose farewell, when He was about to part from his disciples, was, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you;" and whose salutation when He met them again after His Passion and Resurrection, and even after His betrayal too, was still, "Peace be unto you;" may not be untimely spoken, or be proposed to you in vain; but may incline you to remember and prize the good patriarch's caution—a caution which his own experience of life naturally brought to his lips—"See that ye fall not out by the way;" to attend to the Apostle, who amongst the few injunctions with which he charges Titus, (as you hear them in one of the Lessons for the day,) does not fail to bid him, "avoid contentions."

In appealing to you thus, I have in my mind more especially those heartburnings which have become so common on the subject of ritual observances, and the proper manner of offering up our devotions to Almighty God. And I shall regard this Sermon as an appropriate sequel to the one I delivered on Sunday last, on the construction of the Church; and as calculated, from the nature of the argument I shall use in it, to protect my meaning in that Sermon from being misinterpreted or strained, and from being supposed to involve conclusions unreasonably narrow and exclusive.

And first let me premise, that at any rate it is no lukewarm, Laodicean spirit on either side that is to be encountered; and we may take some comfort in that; for a comfort it is, to see men in earnest not merely about politics and trade; about a suffrage or a railroad; which are all to perish in the using; but about higher things than these; about the best manner of drawing up

their hearts to heaven; about the most effectual means of making their devotions lively and lasting.

These early Christians are now, you see, described as “lifting up their *voice* to God with one accord” (Acts iv. 24); and now again, as being “of one *heart* and of one *soul*” (32). I shall submit therefore the few thoughts I have to lay before you, in this order; first, having regard to the *voice*, and then to the *heart* and *soul* of the members of the Church.

I. Assuredly there is something very touching—something which excites the imagination very powerfully, and which kindles our piety in a very high degree, in the idea of a vast assembly of worshippers going before God with the selfsame expressions of prayer and praise. No man can reflect without emotion, even in spite of the several drawbacks which will most unhappily present themselves, that on the Sunday, at the same hour, all the parishes of our land are besetting God with the same supplications; that a universal cry of “Lord, have mercy upon us, Christ, have mercy upon us,” is going up to Him from a multitude of voices with common consent; and that for a time, the passions and wranglings, the fooleries and jests, the labours and vexations, the toils and troubles of a whole people are suspended and hushed, in a high and holy exercise; their thoughts wandering for the once through eternity; the “*adhæsit pavimento anima mea*,” my soul cleaveth unto the dust, untrue for the once; the quakings of the earth, to which in ordinary hours they would be so keenly alive, passing unheeded whilst their spirits are engrossed in the strong conflict of their devotions. There is something very touching, I say, in this consideration—it is *unity* in the form of worship that principally renders it so. How

greatly therefore such unity is to be desired ; how carefully we should labour to attain it by every means which discretion dictates, no one, I think, can doubt ; but in the meanwhile, and until stricter uniformity than that which we at present enjoy can be established, which is evidently to be wished, let us examine our position, and see whether, even as times are, we have not much to be very thankful for ; much in which to take courage : whether our actual differences, (I mean those existing within the Church) are not grossly magnified ; and whilst people are keeping their eye fixed upon these, such as they are, they are not drawn away from a due consideration of the comparative harmony which does prevail amongst us after all.

1. I endeavoured to shew in my last Sermon, that among other symptoms of an organized Church, organized even in the times of the Apostles, there are traces of a settled service ; that this service seemed to be briefly set forth in the forty-second verse of the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, “ And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers ;” the legitimate force of which passage appears to be greatly diminished in our translation by the repeated neglect of the article ; that other tokens of such a service discovered themselves in the form of frequent allusions to a Creed or confession of faith, used at Baptism ; and I might have added, in several incidental phrases or sayings recorded in the Epistles, which might be supposed to have occurred in the course of that service. These indications of a devotional office existing in the Church so early as the days of the Apostles themselves, are confirmed by still clearer glimpses of the same in the writings of the Fathers who lived soon after the Apostles. We learn

from Justin Martyr, that in his day, there were prayers in the congregation in which all joined, "*common prayers*" (Apol. i. § 65), as distinguished from others in another part of the service which were offered by the minister alone, and to which the people only assented by an Amen. We have a fragment of the form in which the catechumens were dismissed before the service of the Eucharist began, preserved by the same Father, as we perceive by comparing it with a passage in the Constitutions, (Apol. i. § 49, and comp. Apostol. Const. viii. c. 6). We have an express reference in Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, to an office for the Eucharist as obtaining in his time, and even to a particular phrase in that office; and so casual a reference as would intimate that it was a thing perfectly notorious, and of ancient standing even then (B. i. c. iii. § 1). We have one of the suffrages, *Sursum corda*, "Lift up your hearts," "We lift them up unto the Lord," preserved by Cyprian (De Orat. Domini), as forming a part of that office then as it does still. We gather from Justin, and from others of nearly the same date, not only that there was a thanksgiving over the elements, (Apol. i. § 65, 66. Irenæus, B. iv. c. 18. § 4; Polycarp, ap. Euseb. E. H. iv. c. 15), but even what were several of the clauses, or at least the substance of the clauses of that thanksgiving (J. M. Apol. i. § 13). We discover from Tertullian that the *Ter Sanctus*, or the Holy, Holy, Holy, was a hymn which constituted a feature of this service in his days, as it does in ours (Tertull. de Orat. § iii). We collect from Irenæus, that there was a form of invocation of the Holy Ghost, or ἐπικλησις, employed in the consecration of the elements (Irenæus, B. iv. c. 18); and from Justin that the Lord's Prayer probably entered into it (Apol. i. § 66). We find in the Epistle of the Church of Smyrna,

containing an account of the death of Polycarp, that that martyr in his extremities gave utterance to a phrase now existing in the post-communion thanksgiving—the *Gloria in excelsis*—as though the form was familiar to him (§ 14). We have the substance of the creed used at baptism furnished by Irenæus and Tertullian; and some of the very terms of the promises and vows made at it; the *renouncing the devil*, the *pomp*, and the glory of the *world*, then as now, the very words of the ritual, as testified by Tertullian and Cyprian (Tertull. De Spectac. § 4. De Animâ, § 35. De Idolat. § 6. Cyprian, Ep. vi. p. 12). There is an expression in Irenæus which may be thought to have a reference to a service for Confirmation (I. xxi. § 3). We have allusion to a service for Marriage, in Tertullian, of which the Holy Communion seems to have been a portion (Ad Uxor. ii. c. 8). And we read in Eusebius, of “Psalms and hymns written by faithful brethren from the beginning” (E. H. v. c. 28). Other features of the primitive services I could name, but these may suffice to satisfy those persons who have not examined the question for themselves (of which the number is large) that when we are speaking of such settled ordinances, as pertaining to the very earliest period of the Church, we have our vouchers to produce; and that assuredly, even in the very infancy of that Church, there existed beyond all dispute, if not a *written*, at all events a *known* Liturgy. This, whatever it was,—perhaps the main characteristics of it are preserved in that most ancient of liturgies which is contained in the Apostolical Constitutions under the name of the Clementine,—this Liturgy, I say, whatever it was, served in all probability for the text of those several liturgies which eventually established themselves in the several great divisions of Christendom. For though

there is much variety in their details, in their language, and even in the *order* of their component parts; they have still so much in common, as to indicate some more primitive original¹, from which they had respectively diverged; the particular circumstances and wants of the Churches to which they belonged modifying them under the guidance and suggestion of independent bishops; even as our own Book of Common Prayer has been revised, contracted, or enlarged, under the like authority.

Such is the view of this subject taken by Hooker; "No doubt," says he, "from God it hath proceeded, and by us it must be acknowledged a work of his singular care and providence, that the Church hath evermore held a prescript form of Common Prayer, although not in all things everywhere the same, yet for the most part retaining still the *same analogy*. So that if the liturgies of all ancient Churches throughout the world be compared among themselves, it may be easily perceived they had all one original mould, and that the public prayers of the people of God in churches thoroughly settled did never use to be voluntary dictates proceeding from any man's extemporal wit." (E. P. v. c. xxv. § 4. Keble's Ed.)

This theory of Hooker's, so consonant with common sense, has been supported by the investigation of ancient liturgies, but little attempted in his day, which has since been pursued; and the result of which has been to show that, as he expresses it, there is in them "the

¹ Cur in unam omnes sententiam ita conspirant, ut in solis verbis discrimen agnoscatur? Nempe quia et illa (sc. Liturgia Jacobi) et aliae quas vetus Ecclesia usurpavit, factae erant ad principem illam sacrorum legem, in qua omnes Christiani Apostolicum exemplar agnoscabant, communi traditione confirmatum. Renandot, Vol. 1. p. xxvi.

same analogy;" that with great circumstantial variety, there is a certain substantial resemblance in them all. It is possible that this original liturgy kept possession of the universal Church for the few years during which its limits were narrow, and its inter-communications frequent; but it could be only for a few years: the several forms it assumed in the several sectional Churches into which the world was divided, must have very soon superseded the use of the one; and it may be to diversity, in this particular as well as in some others, that a correspondent of Cyprian's alludes (Firmilianus Ep. LXXV.) when he writes, that "in many of the provinces many things differed according to the difference of places and names; though there was no departure on that account," he adds, "from the peace and unity of the Church Catholic."

Having now called your attention to the fact that the whole of Christendom, though having very similar services for public worship, had not the very same, unless, it might be, for a few years at the first, and whilst the Church was greatly circumscribed; and yet that its character of unity was not considered as forfeited by such diversities of ministrations; nay, that all the while it was winning its way triumphantly over the earth; I must suggest to you the inference I would draw from it, that as those diversities vastly exceeded any that can be found in the manner of performing the rites of our own Church in various parts of the island in this our day, we should do well to console ourselves, however we may wish it otherwise, with the precedent; nor cry out in despair, as if the like was never heard of before, if in some matters our parish-churches are not in entire unison in practice; and rather contemplate the very many points in which we are united, than the very few in which we are at variance.

2. But I will now pursue the inquiry a stage further, and narrow our argument from the case of Christendom to that of England alone. Without entering then upon the question of what liturgy prevailed in the island before the time of Augustine; which, however, there is reason to believe from the words of that prelate, as reported in Bede (E. H. II. c. 2), differed from the Roman; for having proposed certain terms to the British bishops, he added, that on the acceptance of those terms, "he would tolerate all their other customs, though contrary to his own"—another instance of diversity; without entering, I say, upon that question; the Liturgy of Rome itself, which, under the auspices of Augustine, over-rode the other, did not continue to be long observed *uniformly* within the four seas; but gradually passed into several "uses," as they were called, in several quarters of the kingdom. They, again, as in the former case, substantially alike, but having great circumstantial variety; though certainly nothing like so great as that which subsisted amongst the several liturgies in the several *provinces* of Christendom. Still, however, so considerable was it, that at the time of the Reformation it was a leading object with the Reformers to deliver the nation from this anomaly, and reduce the public worship to a common form. And, accordingly, we find it expressly said in the Preface to the Prayer Book, that "whereas heretofore there had been great diversity in saying and singing in Churches within this realm; some following Salisbury use, some Hereford use, and some the use of Bangor, some of York, some of Lincoln; now from henceforth all the whole realm shall have but one use." Such was the state of things in England, even in Roman Catholic times; and yet the unity of the Church of England in those days, I believe, will not be disputed. Pro-

bably a priest passing from the diocese of York to that of Salisbury, would have been at a loss to conduct the service in the parish of his friend: and yet the unity of the Church was unbroken. Let me again repeat, that I am far from arguing that differences in ritual are unimportant: we have indeed just seen that one of the merits claimed for the Reformation (and I call attention to this) is, that it reduced them; nay, that it was to extinguish them. On the contrary, I, for my part, I confess, have felt a sympathy with those members of our Church, who, by reverting as far as was convenient, to the rule of the Rubric, have been *temperately* endeavouring to effect in our Church more complete uniformity. I am only anxious to abate impatience on this subject; an impatience which has rendered all efforts in this direction now full of difficulty and hazard; and to supply an answer to a querulous objection often alleged against us, and especially by laymen, not always perhaps in the most ingenuous spirit, that there is no uniformity of service in our Churches; that in Northumberland you find one practice maintained, and in Cornwall another. I reply, that I would to God there were greater uniformity; but that I believe there never was nearly so great in the Churches of the several divisions of Christendom, compared with one another, as there is now in the several Churches in England; never nearly so great in the several Churches in England in Romish times as at this moment. And I would suggest that the parties who make this objection, and are clamorous for the interference of this authority or the other to compel us all to act exactly alike, would do well to moderate their zeal by casting an eye upon the past; and informing themselves better than they probably have done, on the difficult subject of Liturgical history:

and I would further suggest that the parties who have been disposed to acquiesce in this complaint, and acknowledge the justice of it, will not do amiss if they think twice, before they enter into any such concession. What member of a congregation, I would ask, on removing his family from one county to another, would now find himself at a loss in the services of the Church he would have to go to ; distracted as those services are represented to be ? He would enter the sacred doors with the most perfect confidence of meeting with things in the main there, as he had left them elsewhere ; and if they were not precisely so in every point, *that* would be the circumstance which would surprize him—it would be the discrepancy which would fix his attention ; the very fact indicating that indentity was what he unconsciously looked for, and was what, on the whole, he found ; that the shock to him was, when that identity was not quite complete. What stronger proof can we have, that on the whole the principle of uniformity does prevail amongst us ? And what better way can be devised for aggravating divisions, than still to overlook this essential concurrence, and to be ever dwelling with a morbid appetite on any accidental disagreement that can be detected ? Let us be alive, if you will, to the inconvenience, the great inconvenience, of even the subordinate differences which are found in the celebration of our public worship ; let us contend, stedfastly as you please, that if we could but walk by one rule, and that the rule already prescribed, the Rule of the Rubric, liberally interpreted, much advantage would ensue ; many unwholesome practices, of serious damage to the Church, be escaped ; many unsound doctrines, and such as our Church never dreamt of encouraging, be defeated ; for no man can investigate the question of

Rubrics, I am sure, without quickly discovering, that like the forms and usages of our legislature and of our courts, though seemingly perhaps trivial or even cumbrous in themselves, they are the safeguards of vast interests; Liberty not more protected by the one, than Religion by the other. Let us, I say, be alive to all this; I have no wish to abate your sense of it a jot; but let us be alive, too, to the evil which results on the other hand from a general impression getting forth amongst the people, that in the meanwhile we are a Church utterly disorganized, with no common feelings or ordinances; and let us not teach them, by joining in this unreasonable cry, that instead of trusting to the progress of sounder knowledge; and to the attention of the country, both clergy and laity, being turned to the defect, and to the blessing of God upon the efforts of patient and self-denying spirits, for a remedy of it in due time; they should rush clamorously to the bishops or to the parliament, for their interference, and invoke them in the name of confusion to put down all such discrepancies with a strong hand.

II. What then would I advise, do you inquire? The course of my argument, which has been to show that the difference itself, on which our divisions are founded, is trifling in amount, compared with the substantial uniformity which rules amongst us after all, points out the quarter to which we should turn our thoughts for the correction; and instructs us to contemplate the abatement of those divisions as to be found not so much in the reduction of that difference, be it what it may, by any technical enactments, as in the oblivion of it, or neglect of it, by the cultivation of a less irritable, sensitive, and testy temperament in ourselves. And this leads me to the second head of my Sermon.

For the divisions of our Church let there be great *searchings of heart*—of *heart*, I say; for there, it can hardly be doubted by those who have been calm spectators of these times, will be perceived to lie the cause and cure of the evil, such as it is; and of the gross exaggeration of it, which it seems the trade of many to promote. Let us look, priests and people, to the manner of *spirit* we are all of, and see whether it is not that which needs correction, far more than the grievances, real or pretended, on which it feeds. Is it the *object* that is in disorder, and requires adjustment? or only the *eye* that is distorted, and makes it seem so? for if the fault be in the sense, it is in vain to direct the remedy to the subject on which it is exercised. Let us be quite sure, in all that we *do*, that we in truth act purely out of a zeal for God's service; that the fire in our censers is certainly not strange fire; that we are governed by an honest and sincere desire for the better care of men's souls, and the deliverance of our own, by a stricter fulfilment of our vows; and do not let it be, because we would hoist the colours of a party, or put rivals to shame, by making them seem, when they are fighting against us, to be fighting against God; and ourselves seem to be upholding God's honour, when we are only struggling for our own; or above all, out of the vanity and vain-glory of seeking distinction, and being not as other men are. Let us be equally sure, in all that we *resist*, that we do so on principle, and because our conscience carefully informed (for there is much in that,) is *really* agrieved; and not because we have a latent dislike to doctrines or duties to which we have subscribed, and which are no longer allowed to be in abeyance; or because habits of self-indulgence and ease into which we have fallen, are disturbed; or because any religious

priority which may have been conceded to us, is called in question. Let all such alloy on either side be withdrawn from the mixed motives, under which we may perhaps have hitherto acted; all the unworthy influences which have been permitted to take their part in our decisions purged away; and I cannot but think that the amount of difference, small as we have seen it is, between the several parties in our Church, would be found even yet wonderfully reduced; and that what remained would gradually disappear too, as the weeds wither, when the noxious spring that nurtured them has been tapped. Here lies the root of the mischief; here, the field for our operations; “out of the *heart* proceed emulations.” Let us all, priests and people, be more humble in heart, and we shall soon be more agreed in utterance; and be in the meanwhile more disposed to cover than expose such disagreement as may be left. “Only by pride cometh contention;” only by pride—by nothing else. It is this passion that is at the bottom of all feuds; as it is *humility* that is the universal peacemaker. What a treasure, must we all have often observed in a household, is a leading member of it of a lowly mind! What virtue perpetually goes out of that saintly soul, to cement together all that have the happiness to be under the same roof with it! What a mother in Israel is a matron endowed with that grace! how do “her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her!” So is it in the Church, the household of God. In the beautiful Psalm, the 15th, to the question, “Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, and who shall rest in thy holy hill?” the answer runs, “he that *setteth not by himself*, but is *lowly* in his own eyes; and maketh much of them *that fear the Lord*;” as though a natural connexion sub-

sisted between *humility*, and a *friendly interpretation* of the actions of those who *seem* bent on serving God. How little mutual misunderstanding, how few jealous heart-burnings would there be, where a spirit like this prevailed! How would criminations and recriminations die before it; and there being no fuel, the fire go out! Of all the Churches planted by St. Paul, none was so full of divisions, as the Church of Corinth; and we may gather from hints which escape from the Apostle almost inadvertently throughout his epistles to that Church, that none was so full of pride. "If any man among you seemeth to be *wise*, let him become a fool that he may be wise" (1 Cor. iii. 18). "*Judge* nothing before the time" (iv. 5). "Let no one of you be *puffed* up, as though I would not come" (i. 18). "And ye are *puffed* up, and have not rather mourned" (v. 2). "*Your glorying* is not good" (6). "If any man seem to be *contentious*, we have no such custom" (xi. 16). "I beseech you, brethren, that ye *submit* yourselves to such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth" (xvi. 15, 16). "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; *casting down imaginations*, and every *high thing* that *exalteth* itself against the knowledge of God" (2 Cor. x. 3, 5). "Do ye look on things after the outward *appearance*" (7). "His letters, say they, are weighty, and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech *contemptible*" (10). "He that *glorieth*, let him glory in the Lord, for not he that *commendeth himself* is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (17, 18). "Ye suffer *fools* gladly, seeing that ye yourselves are *wise*." (xi. 19.) There is not one of these passages, perhaps, which are found scattered over the Epistles to the Corinthians, that does not strike at the pride which showed itself amongst the members of that Church under

one form or other. So proud were they, that the Apostle would not receive wages of them, lest they should make their boast of having furnished them : " I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so I will keep myself." (2 Cor. xi. 9.) So proud were they, that they provoked him in his turn to exalt himself and his office in mere self-defence, in a manner which calls forth from him excuses again and again : " Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also." (xi. 18.) " I am become a fool in glorying, ye have compelled me." (xii. 11.) So proud were they, that he thinks it necessary to caution them not to despise Timothy (1 Cor. xvi. 11.), one of the very choicest of the Apostle's disciples, only having the misfortune to be young. It is in the Epistle to this Church, this divided Church, that we have the famous description and commendation of Charity, almost every feature of which has *Humility* for its basis—" it suffereth long," " it vaunteth not itself," " is not puffed up," " doth not behave itself unseemly," " is not easily provoked," " beareth all things," " endureth all things." The contentious state of the Church, no doubt, calling forth this animated sketch of the *healing* virtue; the *real remedy* The coincidence is a curious one; for the passage would not be half so appropriate in any other of the Apostle's Epistles. The same divisions lasted to the time of Clemens, Bishop of Rome; and he, like his great predecessor, proposed to reduce them still in the same way, by preaching *Humility*; not so much by a minute examination of the alleged grievances, as by a general recommendation to cultivate a temper which would not foster them. " The sceptre of the Majesty of God," says he, " our Lord Jesus Christ, did not come in pomp and pride, although having every thing at his command; but in *humility*; even as the Holy Spirit spake concerning

him, for it saith "he hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid, as it were, our faces from him—he was despised and we esteemed him not." (Isaiah liii.) And again; "But I am a worm and no man, the very scorn of men and the outcast of the people." (Ps. xxii.) "Ye see, brethren," continues Clemens, "what an example is proposed to us! Thus if the *Lord* so humbled himself, what shall not we do; we who, through him, are brought under the yoke of his grace (§ XVI.)?" And then he proceeds to set forth other patterns of the same virtue in the Saints and Patriarchs of old. So clear was he where the evil lay! So little was his attention diverted by the contemplation of symptoms, from the seat of the disease!

Our Church, when she sends her minister to a sick man's chamber, bids him, on entering the very doors, say, "*Peace* be to this house, and to all that dwell in it"—another vestige, by the way, of a form of the Primitive Church. And, as if anxious to promote the same blessed temper in the minds of those who are assembled to partake of her public services in the House of God, and knowing that "*Peace*" is only to be found in Humility; she subdues them at once, and before the devotions of the day begin, by the deepest expressions of it. How abject (at her dictation) is the confession of our unworthiness, as soon as we open our lips in her congregation—in her congregation, the scene and the subject of our bickerings of late. How do we make haste and delay not to lay our sins before God at her bidding, "with an *humble* and *lowly* heart!" How do we respond to her memento (for does not our heart bear witness to its authority?) that we "ought at all times *humbly* to ac-

knowledge them ; but most chiefly so, then !” How do we prepare to accompany the Minister in his exposure of them, even with “ a *humble voice* ;” our very articulation chastened to Humility ! And after our Church has thus taught us, in her own gentle and Christian spirit, to stoop so low when we go into these Courts of the Lord ; how can we bear ourselves so proudly, when we proceed to walk in them ; and, calling ourselves Churchmen, employ ourselves in the course of the service that ensues, in playing the critics in our prayers ; whilst she is whispering peace, we making ourselves ready for battle ; our thoughts fixed upon this posture or that, this omission or that redundancy ; bowing our heads like a bulrush at the first, only to lift them the higher in the sequel ; instead of continuing unremittingly to pour out our souls before God, and appropriate to ourselves the glowing petitions our tongues are offering up ; begging the Lord to have mercy on us, as conscience-stricken sinners ; to hear us, as importunate suppliants ; to deliver us, as men and women whom Satan hath bound these many years, and who long to be set free ; absorbed in the Rite, till we forget to quarrel with the Ritual. In this spirit let us worship ; and then, how can we help making common cause as worshippers ? Then shall we be drawn towards one another in spite of ourselves by a law of our nature ; and these feelings once dominant amongst us, all disputes upon minor points will subside ; we shall deal with one another as persons who being already agreed in great things, would only be too glad to be agreed in all, and being of one heart, we should soon be of one lip, *unius labii*, too. And so may God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace, give us grace seriously to lay to heart the danger we are in by our

divisions; and take away from us all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord; that as there is but one body and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all; so we may henceforth be all of one *heart*, and one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and with one *mind* and one *mouth* glorify him, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON IV.

(Preached at Great St. Mary's, Cambridge, Nov. 30, 1845, Advent Sunday.)

ROMANS XII. 12.

The night is far spent: the day is at hand.

AT the beginning of the Ecclesiastical year, our Church naturally shapes her services in such a manner, as to awake her members to increased activity and zeal in their Christian calling; and accordingly in the Epistle, the Gospel, and the Collect, of every Sunday in Advent, she reminds them of the Second Coming of Christ to take account of us all, in language not unadapted to its very near approach; now telling them of the signs in the heavens that are to precede it; now bidding them "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come;" now apprising them that "the Lord is nigh, and that we need be careful for nothing;" and now, in the stirring language of the text, warning them, that "the night is far spent, the day is at hand." I feel therefore, that I shall be acting in accordance with the teaching of our Church, thus expressed, if in the present Sermon I draw your attention to the *value of time*; no new subject assuredly; but a most important one nevertheless, as those subjects which are most familiar usually are; and therefore such as enter largely into the Sermons of the Apostles themselves, who talk of "putting people in remembrance" of this or that; of "stirring up their pure minds by way of remembrance;" use such phraseology as, "what I have told you *often*, I now tell you weeping;" and cry, "brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an *old* commandment, which ye have had from the beginning:" it being the

part of the instructed scribe, we read, to bring out of his treasures things *old* as well as new.

And no man can go through the world with his eyes open, and not see the many tokens which God seems advisedly to have set in it to bespeak the value of time.

1. He has made our lives obviously very short, compared with the work he has laid before us to do in them. What fields of knowledge have we to explore! What fields of action to enter into! What theories to develop! What obstacles to overcome! What wonders to fathom! What phenomena to watch and record, from which no safe conclusion can be drawn till observations shall have been accumulated by a multitude of successive generations! So vast do all the works with which we are surrounded appear, as compared with the span assigned us in which to contemplate them; in which to take part in them! So clamorously does nature itself call to us, *carpe diem*; make the most of the passing moment, if you mean even to sip at the brink of the well of knowledge; if you mean to put the tip of your finger to the burdens of life!

2. Again; how does God teach us the value of time, by presenting to us on every side vast results as proceeding from the steady application of it, even where the agent is insignificant, or the effort inconsiderable! Streams silently sawing their course through flint, and making for themselves in the end a channel for their waters. Hills sunk and valleys raised by regular but imperceptible deposits. Forests creeping into grandeur, whilst we are asleep. Rocks, capable of breaking the most gallant ship, insensibly heaved up from under the waters by the ceaseless operations of active worms. Not to speak of the colossal achievements of man himself; pyramids reared by the unremitting addition of brick to brick; aqueducts made to traverse impracticable regions

by the same aggregate of minute labours; whole territories cleared of primeval woods that had overrun them, by the successive strokes of a woodman's axe. Time improved, turned to account, fixed as it flies, is the great ingredient in all these consummations—consummations, which of themselves proclaim to us what a sin it is to waste a talent which, if duly administered, is so full of power.

3. Then how has God filled the world with *warnings* of the value of time! How insecure has he made all calculations which reckon even upon a few days to come! How shattered are our schemes wont to be, where the execution of them depends on things abiding in one stay even for a week! Who does not acknowledge the force of the Apostle's exclamation, "Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow?" How do all the changes and chances of life, its very system mutability, cry aloud to us, "What thou doest, do quickly!"

4. Again, how does God admonish us of the value of time, by so constructing things, as that opportunities once let slip, *i. e.* time wasted, are never to be redeemed, do what we will to repair our folly! A seedness suffered to escape, and the harvest for the year irrecoverable; a youth passed in indolence, and no compensation to be made for it by exertions, however great, in after days; a tide lost, and a cargo ruined; a drug in season rejected, and a disease incurable fastened on us! In a word, how does success in life almost altogether depend on the vigorous seizure of the moment; its failure almost as certainly ensue from doing even the right thing at the wrong instant! The inconvenience too,

which is the result of such procrastination and delay, usually out of all proportion, as it should seem, to the neglect—as though mankind were to be disciplined into a due estimate of the vast value of time, by seeing the fine set upon trifling with it, so prodigiously heavy.

5. Above all; how has God given token of the value of time by his manner of peopling the world, and keeping it peopled, and the moral it inculcates! How evident does he make it, that he sends us here and withdraws us hence, on a quick march, like the figures on a lantern, one race of men after another; as though he were bent on observing how we are disposed to act in our generation; sufficient, and but just sufficient, space allowed us for the trial; and then, our parts played, our characters tested, our merits registered with a view to ulterior dealings with us, our dismissal pronounced; and our places taken by other probationers.

It is a mysterious scheme—but so it is. So was it, we know, with the Israelites in their journey through the desert; protracted as that journey was, for the object which God himself declares to them, saying, “And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no” (Deut. viii. 2. and xiii. 3). And who can contemplate the circumstances of our existence here, and fail to be satisfied that God is detaining us in our journey upon earth—in this case too a journey of some forty years on the average—for the self-same end, “to humble us and to prove us, to know what is in our heart, whether we will keep his commandments or no?” Are we not conscious that a variety of tests are in the process of application to us; each calcu-

lated to extract from us some virtue or vice which responds to its peculiar action? Now we are tried with high estate, to discover whether we are humble; now with broken fortunes, to discover whether we are content; now with sickness, to discover whether we are patient; now with health to discover whether we are sober; now with perplexities, to discover whether we are wise; now with injuries, to discover whether we are forbearing; now with claims on us, to discover whether we are generous; now with appeals to us, to discover whether we are just. Nay, do we not see these tests changed according to the change of our age; those which have touched us in our youth, succeeded by others which touch us in our manhood; and these again making way for others which touch us in our decay? Now the lusts of the flesh; now the pride of life; now the deceitfulness of riches. Further still,—Does not often some new and unforeseen and anomalous test seem to start up, as if to crown the work; so that when we have stood the proving of others, it may be seen whether we do not fall under that? David, for all that appears to the contrary, had come out of the numberless tests to which he had been subjected in the course of his most eventful life, clear and without reproach—nay, it is said of him, that “he was blameless, save in the matter of Uriah”—till that evil hour when he rose from his bed, and walked upon the roof of his house; and then on the sudden the temptation assailed him, for which he found himself too weak after all. Hazael, for all we know of him, had been faithful in his generation, the confidential servant of his sovereign, up to the time when he went on the message from him to Elisha: and when that prophet told him of the horrid acts he was on the very point of committing; and amongst them, hinted that he

would murder his master ; he, who, no doubt, fancied he knew himself better than the prophet knew him ; and that having been a man so long, he was not going to be a monster then, exclaimed, “ Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing ? ” and yet, sure enough, on the morrow, so soon, the temptation of a crown presenting itself to him with a force he had not anticipated, that dog he proved to be ; for he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on Benhadad’s face, so that he died, and Hazael reigned in his stead. Indeed, God himself, who occasionally vouchsafes to lay bare his own proceedings, manifests the dispensation I am developing to be according to his permission, in the case of Job ; allowing Satan, who disputed the perfection of the patriarch’s character, and ascribed what virtue there seemed to be in it, to the manner in which God had hedged him about, not suffering him to be put to the proof ; allowing, I say, Satan to assail him on this side and on that ; and to spy where he could find in him the weak place : now giving him licence to put forth his hand on his substance, but reserving his person ; and now, again, giving up to him his person, but withholding from him his life. The temptation of our blessed Lord himself proceeds upon the same principle ; the test changed from time to time, when it had spent itself and done its duty, and another substituted in its place ; now the sensual appetites ; now ambition ; now unbelief. Who can doubt, in the face of all this, that *he* takes the true view of the life of man, who regards it as a short series of probations ; its duration that which just suffices for the completion of the experiments to be made on us, wherein we ourselves are free and conscious participators ; and to be valued by us accordingly, as determining our worth finally and for ever.

Brethren! where can I find an audience on whom to enforce these considerations, on whom to impress the vast value of time, more fitting than that now around me? Few of you are more than in your prime; most of you, ordinarily speaking, have a long term of life before you; and all of you are of a class, whether from rank, from property, from education, or from all these combined, to make the manner of your spending your time, the value you set on it, of very great importance to many besides yourselves. Would to God, any thing I may say may awake those who may have need of the memento, myself amongst the number, to a sense of their responsibilities, that the bread I now cast on the waters may come again after many days.

Some amongst you are of the privileged orders, as they are called; born to station and affluence; and not driven to exertion by that stern necessity which is the task-master of so many, and compels them, whether they will or no, to make some use, at least, of their time; and therefore you are under the greater temptation to take your ease. But privilege, remember, is looked upon with jealousy at all times, and never more so than in these; and though the same laws that secure your prerogatives to you, secure also the lesser stakes of those below you, to them; and this in some measure constitutes your protection; yet, doubtless, such advantages cannot be relied on inordinately, nor such safeguard be strained overmuch. It is impossible for people to see the prodigious gulf by which the poorest classes are now separated from the wealthiest—a gulf increasing in width every day—the grinding penury, nay, the forced exile from almost all that has been nearest and dearest to them from childhood, to which so many are now driven; and the rigid economy to

which so many more are reduced in order to earn a bread ; hoping and looking for nothing beyond a bread ; without the merits of a system, the surface of which at least presents so many anomalies, being severely canvassed ; and without jealous curiosity being directed to the manner in which the superfluities of the opulent are disposed of. The true protection of great estates must, in the long run, lie in the general conviction of all ranks, that their inviolable maintenance is for the benefit of all ; and *that* conviction must very mainly depend on the use their possessors are perceived to make of them. It is impossible, again, for people to see the great national benefits, which resources like those over which you have the control, can confer, when duly dispensed, without scanning narrowly, not the reasonable enjoyment, but the inconsiderate waste of them on mere selfish ends. Contiguous estates cannot surrender the same rental, the one to minister to the personal luxury of a private voluptuary ; the other to the support of a school, a college, or a hospital, without the thought forcing itself on many an observer, of the different amount of good the same sum commands, according to the different direction which is given to it. Far be it from me to deny or to disparage the advantages which accrue to a country from the dispersion over it of great proprietors. Those advantages are so many and so obvious that it is almost needless to enumerate them. None can have lived in districts where they are wanting without having perceived how wholesome is the presence of such men to the community at large—it will manifest itself in the better administration of the laws ; in the courage and spirit with which they are upheld ; in the frank and fearless prosecution of the just and right ; in the abatement of vindictive feuds ; in the discourage-

ment of petty, litigious, and narrow-minded broils; in the reproof of tyranny and oppression; in the more liberal hire of the labourer who hath reaped down the fields; in the support of injured innocence; in the dissipation of prejudice and ignorance; in the establishment and maintenance of wise and benevolent institutions; in the diffusion of good principles and moral knowledge; in short, in the virtue which escapes in a thousand ways from a character placed by circumstances in a position which exempts it from the influence of much that is debasing, and lifts it above the "stir of this dim spot." My argument touches not the merit of the order; they are as necessary for the good of the whole, even as the charitable foundations themselves to which I before alluded; and though in a less direct and popular manner, contribute, I am persuaded, to the public weal no less effectually: but then it must be by their acting (as I am most willing to confess is the case with vast numbers, and with greater numbers every day,) under a sense of the responsibility of their position; under a sense that where much is given much will be required; under a sense that what God said of Canaan is true of the whole earth, "the land is mine, and ye are strangers and sojourners with me." (Lev. xxv. 23.) The proprietorship which God asserted himself to have in that land, by fines and heriots, as it were, imposed on it in the shape of tithes and Sabbatical years, and even the gleanings of the corn-field and the vineyard; the same lordship of the soil, though affirmed perhaps in a different manner, still must exist in the very nature of things, the world over; and God will claim it too on the day when he brings all to book, and calls before him his servants to reckon with them for their holdings. It is not the legitimate use of wealth, I repeat, of which God

or man complains—not God, for his Scriptures abound in examples of men of large possessions who were his favourites and friends; not man, for by institutions and laws, framed as he considers for the benefit of all, he protects and encourages them. It is not the legitimate use, but the selfish misapplication of wealth, that heaven and earth cry out against. The rich man in the Gospel, whose case is stated by our Lord himself, does not appear to have perverted his property to the positive propagation of wickedness; he had simply employed it to the gratification of his appetites, in a luxurious table, and a gorgeous wardrobe, as if it were all his own. He had suffered Lazarus to lie at his gates, to be sure; but he had not maltreated him; nay, it may be supposed he had let him partake of his crumbs; for he seems to have considered that the dole of the bread he had given him in times past had been on a scale to entitle him to ask of him, in his turn, to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue. And yet he lifted up his eyes in torments. So God read the deserts of such a character—and man reads them after the same fashion; hard to be persuaded, that property is meant for such purposes as those that rich men turned it to; that the right to it is so absolute as to be above scrutiny or animadversion; and that the possessor is amenable to no laws but those of his own self-will: least of all, will such a view of it be tolerated at a crisis in the country, when so much wants correction in our social system; correction which cannot be achieved without the production of means the most ample; when ages of supine neglect are to be atoned for by twofold vigilance, and long arrears of duty to our fellow-creatures to be paid off by strenuous self-surrender, if we would not have the frame of society come down about our heads. This is

the present state of things ; and it is for those who are born to rank and affluence to consider well the part God has assigned them to play at this eventful conjuncture ; to reflect whether he has not given them tools to work with, in their possessions ; pointed out to them their work, in the wants of their times ; and prescribed the limits within which it is to be done, in the span of their age. Is this a hard saying ? Does flesh and blood resent this interference with its joys ? Our Church contemplates as much, when she makes it a clause in her Litany, that the Lord would deliver us “in all time of our wealth.” Happy they who reconcile themselves to the privation, such as it is, which duty enjoins by the case of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem ; and remember, how having run through the whole file of pleasures which even the resources of a monarchy could yield him, sickening of one after another, and finding vanity of vanities in them all, he ended his fastidious course by the discovery that the greatest of all luxuries was the luxury of doing good ; and proclaimed the result of his experience in these memorable words—“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter : Fear God and keep his commandments : for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.”

Again, still more amongst you there are—indeed who amongst you are there not in this condition ? who, if not belonging to these privileged orders in the common acceptance of the term—these Corinthian capitals of the pillar—constitute its solid shaft, by enjoying that greatest of all privileges (for who that possesses it would exchange it for any other ?) the privilege of *education*. What a talent is this committed to your

trust! What a capacity is there in this for turning time to account! for extracting a value from it beyond its own! And woe be to those who hold it, and yet do not make it render its natural fruits! Society, like the man of Macedonia, who said unto Paul, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us," has a controversy with such men, appealing to them and imploring them above all others, for the repairs in its system of which it stands in such undeniable need. When the little city with few men within it was besieged by the great king, who came against it, and built great bulwarks against it; it was the poor *wise* man who was found in that city, that by his wisdom delivered it. (Eccles. ix. 14.) And only look what an educated man can do towards restoring the breaches in our walls, if he does but lend his faculties and his life to it, aware of the value of time, and the duties it imposes. How can a single Minister of a parish, for instance, during the short-lived tenure of his office, with little or no personal means, but wielding the resources which an intelligent mind and a good cause are sure to put into his hands, in a few years change the aspect of a whole district; set a whole community to rights; make a desert, as the Prophet speaks, like a garden of the Lord! And if it were possible to have every parish in England served by one of these choice spirits, for one generation or more, who can tell the force which would be given to our Church? Who can calculate the hold she would get and keep on the affections of the people? and what could stop her in her triumphant crusade against sin? Have not many of you seen—I have—the forlorn, ignorant, abandoned settlement of human beings with souls, actually won from the waste by such a single workman? Churches, schools, parsonages, rising up as if by magic in that once blighted

but now favoured spot? Yet who the magician, but a simple man of God, conscious in the intelligence he possesses of a power to set others in action; conscious, in the righteousness of his cause, of having a friend to back him in the secret workings of every heart which beats around him; and conscious, in the swiftness of time, and the account to be rendered of it, of having no license for delay. Contrast that man with his college friend, we will say, or schoolfellow, who with private resources ten times more ample than his own perhaps, has been loitering through the years in which the other has been so active and so happy—for it is the privilege of such a spirit to go on his way rejoicing, and to reap the present reward of doing his duty manfully, in sunshine of the heart—contrast that man, I say, with his quondam yokefellow, who has been loitering through the same interval in the vapid pursuit of pleasure, which he has nevertheless not found, though his companion, who has not gone out of his way to seek it, has shared it so abundantly; with his grooms, his kennels, and his keepers, at a watering-place, or at his club, things indifferent and even innocent in themselves, only not to be made the staple of one's being; letting life thus ebb away, as if answerable to none for the use of it; and how sad are the reflections which result from the comparison! The one, whilst he is in the world unconscious why he is alive—can our Liturgy mean that the like of him “should bless God for his creation?”—and when he goes out of it, leaving his place to close up after him, like the air after the arrow, without a memorial to testify of him remaining, more than if a mere animal had died; unless it be a mendacious inscription on a sumptuous sepulchre; and yet once possessed of the same faculties as his friend, and capable of the same good

deeds, had he but known like him how to redeem the time: the other shedding blessings around him whilst living; his very acts proclaiming why he should be permitted to live; and when dead, still destined to speak for generations to come in the institutions, perhaps, or habits, he has bequeathed to them; giving substantial token by these of his own sense at least (and who would not respect his authority?) that there is a world beyond the grave, on which our eyes should ever be fixed, and to which our labours should ever tend; this world made the avenue to it; and of whom it might be said over his modest resting-place, by one who looked around and contemplated the labours of love he had left behind, still yielding their increase, '*si monumentum requiris circumspice,*' if you ask for his monument, it is on every side of you. Who can regard the respective courses which these co-evals have run, and doubt that if we are indeed living under a moral government at all, there must be eventually an enormous difference in their portions?

Neither in the picture I have been drawing of the impression for good which even one man of education, properly possessed of an idea of his own responsibility, or of the value of time, can produce on our social system, have I allowed great talents to enter into the account. I shall not enlarge upon the reckoning God will have with persons endowed with those glorious gifts, set as they will probably be in the most commanding stations in life, and capable, especially when fixed in places of public trust or even of public education like our own, as they often will be, of moulding the character of the public mind, and the national habits of thought and action, for evil or for good. I shall not, for obvious reasons, presume to meddle with such a theme; or venture even to remind such men of the over-

whelming obligations they are under to God and man : far rather would I have them standing in this place, of which they would be more worthy, I say it unfeignedly, and I be listening to the words of wisdom which might flow from their lips. My argument is addressed to the many—my anxiety is to excite the ordinary class of hearers, and especially the young, to make the most of their time ; by representing to them that to be benefactors of their species, to be engines for shedding blessings largely amongst their fellow men, it is not *splendid parts* that are wanted in them, for the possessors of these are few, and God would not allow the welfare of his creatures to depend on virtues rarely to be found ; it is not splendid parts that are wanted in them, but a strong sense of their responsibility for the use of such as they have. Indeed, I doubt not that many a one in the world there is, who having watched the unostentatious fortunes of those with whom he was once familiar in his youth ; and of whose minds he had then the opportunity of taking the measure ; has been surprised to see the achievements for good, which instruments so humble in talents, as he knew them to be, have effected ; and takes some silent shame to himself, that so much more highly gifted, he has himself proved so far behind them in practical and sterling worth ; that whilst he has been wearing life away, he says to himself, a speculative humourist perhaps, in ingenious fancies, and deep communion with his own thoughts ; they, though they aspired less high, have been really acting the nobler part, in doing good, in mitigating distress, in diffusing charity, in abating sin, in rallying the scanty resources their own little neighbourhood might afford for spreading humble truths amongst humble men ; dissatisfied with fugitive and cloistered virtue, and better pleased

to run the race not without dust and heat. Nay more, I deem it possible, that a further humiliating thought might cross the mind of the same party, when in coming in contact again, after the interval, with these companions of his prime, he finds them now exhibiting powers for which he was not prepared from old recollections of them; the difference between himself and them not so wide as it once was; as though their faculties, such as they were, after having been wrestling with the active duties of life, as it was meant they should do, had acquired a vigour, which his own had lost, moving in scenes of contemplation only, and as though it was with him, as it was with Moab—"Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity; therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed" (Jer. xlviii. 11). But if these men, regarded even in the course of their *lives*, furnish so much matter to others for searching and self-reproaching reflection, how much more will they in their last ends. Who shall have earned the benediction, if they have not, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they *rest from their labours*?" Who shall venture to take to themselves comfort in the past, if not they; when instead of finding it awake in them the recollection of splendid gifts unimproved, unimparted, it gives them hope, that even with their humble ones they will not have lived in vain? And to whom if not to them can the cheering welcome of the Lord apply, "Well done, good and faithful servants, ye have been faithful over a *few things*, I will make you rulers over many things?"

St. Paul, who was himself an earnest and zealous man, and did nothing by halves, would not allow John

Mark to be an associate of his, in his second visit to the Churches, because in a former one, "he would not go with them to *the work*"—he would go with them on a pleasant cruise to Cyprus, where probably he had friends and relations, for he was sister's son to Barnabas, and Barnabas was of the country of Cyprus, but he would not go with them to *the work*. The reproof was not lost upon him; for some years later we find the Apostle speaking of him, as one of his "*fellow-workers* unto the kingdom of God, which had been a comfort to him" (Col. iv. 10, 11). Be it ours, one and all, to lay ourselves out for *the work*. God knows there is enough for every one of us to do at his own doors; and the heart of every one of us will tell him what is his own proper province: to that let each of us address himself, and in that let each of us be content to labour, and not look too far or too wide. The work immediately before you, my younger hearers, may I make bold to say, is to fit yourselves here for your future callings; to turn to the utmost account the golden years and opportunities you are now enjoying. How will you rue the waste of them hereafter, when the spirit that now flushes you, called up by troops of friends and sprightly scenes, and wants forestalled by others, shall have escaped, and you have to drain, in comparative solitude and self-dependence, the dregs of the cup you will have prepared for yourselves! The knowledge which you are here in the way to lay up, is power in abeyance: the principles and habits which you are here in a condition to acquire, will sanctify that knowledge, and dispose you hereafter to apply it to the ends we have been contemplating to-day—the glory of God, and the welfare of your fellow-creatures. For here, at any rate, your Church asserts herself; and however overborne elsewhere, by the busi-

ness and pleasures and factions and indifference of the world, takes you here constantly and carefully by the hand. Here you have her daily ministrations, to be made by you at your choice, a morning and evening roll-call, or a morning and evening sacrifice; an irreverent muster, or an incipient course of daily religious exercise, to end only with your lives. Here you have her holy-days, and holy seasons, her vigils and her fasts, at least recognized. It is for yourselves to realize them to what extent you please, by your own unobtrusive adoption of them. Who will forbid you, who will observe upon you? Doubtless you may leave the place, as too many before you have left it, with no other associations connected with it than those of folly and idleness and excess; and having so done, abuse and betray it hereafter, as such use of it leads men to do: but I am persuaded better things of you—for far other are the characteristics that belong to it. How many have gone forth from these busy yet contemplative scenes, made the saints they proved mainly by their studious and thoughtful sojourn amongst them! How holy are the recollections which Ridley, the foremost perhaps of our martyrs, entertained of Cambridge, and recorded in his touching farewell to the world he was about to quit! It was here, he felt, that he had been nursed into what he was; here, that he had been nerved to what he had to do; here, disciplined to what he had to endure. How many have been the weary souls, their earthly course of toil and trouble drawing to its close, who have returned or longed to return, in the spirit of a Wotton, to these haunts of their youth, as the fittest they could find in which to trim their spirits for their approaching flight; in which to make their peace with God! It is yours then to profit by such influences now,

whilst you may, that at length you may go out from amongst us, under the lasting bias of them, and give evidence to the world by your lives and conversation, that you have been nurtured in the schools of the prophets. As it is ours, whose privilege it is still to dwell here, and here to find the field of our duties, to make them indeed such schools; and to endeavour to discharge those duties as faithful stewards of very high trusts; maintaining wholesome discipline; discouraging needless expense; putting temptations, as far as may be, by salutary rules, out of our younger brethren's way; keeping 'watch over them' as standing in a parent's stead, with a parent's eye, even as we shall hereafter wish the tutors of other days to deal by *our* children; grounding them all, whatever be their destiny, in the faith of Christ, and in that sound form of it which our own Church upholds; and above all, setting before them ourselves, blameless, nay, conspicuous examples: that when, after a few years, we retire from this seat of learning, the stage of our probation for the present, as in the ordinary course of things is the case with so many who have been engaged in its service, we may not have treasured up for our ourselves in our retirement the painful remembrance of having done the work of the Lord (for the Lord's work education is or ought to be,) whilst we staid in it, negligently; or of having made ourselves in any sort partakers of the sins of those young men who shall hereafter go astray, by having failed to keep them when committed to our care, probably with much anxiety and many prayers, with a faithful and true heart, and to rule them prudently with all our power.

When Samuel was now old and grey-headed, and felt that the time was approaching when he would have to surrender the various offices he had filled into other

hands, strong in the consciousness of a long, laborious, and useful life, he ventured to appeal to his countrymen, who had seen how he had walked before God from his childhood, whether they could witness ought against him before the Lord and before his anointed. May we, one and all, young and old, student and teacher, be able to stand the proving as well as that aged prophet did, when our time comes for yielding up our commissions! And to that end, may we ever keep in mind, that dreadful day, the prospect of which is now brought before us so vividly by our Church, and the awe of which has been upon me whilst I have presumed to address to you these homely truths, and has sustained me in the plainness of my speech; the day when our Lord shall come again in his glorious Majesty to judge both quick and dead. For oh! what a search will there be then! How will the misuse of our talents and time then find us out in all its most remote effects—remote effects upon others, which none will be so much amazed at as ourselves! Knit so closely as we are together, grinding as we are so intimately all at the same mill, we cannot calculate the interests around us we touch, the distance to which our conduct vibrates. We may guess it faintly by some accident which chances to expose it once and again as we go on our way through life; some trivial word, so it seems to us, found perhaps years after it had been uttered, not to have fallen to the ground; some deed done without thought, revived in our recollection by results we never dreamed of. But what an appalling idea of the judgment is presented by the reflection, that *all* the consequences of our acts or of our indolence, however distant, however indirect, however complicated, will then be traced, unravelled, and brought home to us! Alas! may we not cry out with the pro-

phet, "Who shall live when God doeth this?" What contemplation can induce us to make a conscience of our doings if this cannot? Souls whom we never meant to hurt; nay, in many cases souls of whose existence we were not perhaps conscious, blasted, unwittingly, by some dereliction of ours! brands left to the burning, through some inglorious sloth of ours, that would not trouble itself, whilst time was, to pluck them out! May we, I repeat, think on these things, and be ever making our preparations for that terrible audit, by working whilst we have the light, and so using our time, that through the all-prevailing merits of a merciful Redeemer it may be crowned by a blessed eternity!

S E R M O N V.

(Preached at Great St. Mary's, Cambridge, before the University, Wednesday,
March 24, 1847, the Day appointed for the General Fast.)

PSALM CXLVIII. Part of 7th and 8th Verses.

*Praise the Lord from the earth...fire, and hail; snow, and
vapours; wind and storm; fulfilling his word.*

It was the custom of our blessed Lord to draw from the events of the day the material for his sermons, and give his lessons a force even beyond their own by adopting a moment for their delivery propitious to the reception of them. And following his example, and indeed in accordance with the suggestions of our natural reason, the Church ever has been wont to turn to a religious account any striking incidents with which the scenes of this chequered life may supply her—be they cause for thanksgiving or for lamentation—and, setting upon them her seal, dedicate them to God. On such occasions, her Minister finds half his work done, and that perhaps the most difficult of the whole, without any efforts of his own; the attention of his audience secured by the catastrophe itself; and their minds prepared to sympathise with the moral he may derive from it, however simple and unpretending it may be, by the temper they are of already. At ordinary times, and when the topics he may handle are indifferent, those topics may prove to be such as fail to excite the interest he expects—his hearers may be fastidious—his words, like the arrows of Jonathan, may go beyond some, and fall short

of others, and come home to the hearts of none. But on these extraordinary solemnities, and above all, on one so affecting as the present, a congregation of Christian men cannot be critical, cannot be unconcerned, and before the preacher calls on them they will answer, and while he is yet speaking they will hear. Therefore is it wise in Rulers, solicitous for the welfare of the people, not to let such opportunities of impressing them run to waste; but by exhortations to those restraints of the flesh which set the spirit more free for high and holy thoughts, and by the appointment of timely penitential services, guide them to good; and therefore may those who are called to the office of conveying these impressions, undertake it the more boldly, knowing that the feelings of their congregations go along with them, and will supply many defects in themselves.

That the seasons are used by God for something more than producing food for his creatures, is taught us in many passages of holy writ. He has this purpose before him, no doubt, in regulating them, that man may *live* thereby; but he has a further purpose also, a *moral* purpose, that man may be made better by them; that he may gather from them lessons of a righteous life, and be placed by them in situations that demand religious duties. The system of the *natural* world has from the first period of the history of things been represented as bound up very closely in the system of the *moral* world; the one acting intimately upon the other. The first *sin* brought about a change in the *productiveness* of the earth. It may be difficult to see how the two things are connected, but it was God's pleasure that so it should be; and when Adam fell, the ground was cursed too, and thorns and thistles were brought forth of it: the *moral* character of man, and the system of inani-

mate nature, by some means or other, most intimately combined. If we follow the story of early times which the Bible reads us, we shall still find the same scheme taking effect. It was the Almighty's will that the knowledge of him should be dispersed throughout the world by one peculiar people. The race of Abraham is selected by Him as his missionaries for the conversion of the heathen. But the instrument by which He puts them in motion is still the seasons. He sends a famine into the land of Canaan, where they dwell; and this drives them down to Egypt, where they are caused to settle; living in close alliance with that nation, and no doubt communicating to them great religious truths of which they had otherwise been ignorant; for that many of the Egyptians had received some knowledge of God from the Israelites is clear, both from the attention they paid to the threats of Moses, for "those that feared the Lord *among the servants of Pharaoh*," we read, "made his servants and cattle flee into the houses before the hail came;" and from the numbers of them, "the *mixed multitude*," which accompanied the Israelites at last through the wilderness, the ringleaders of that longing for Egypt which so soon beset the camp—numbers so considerable, that when the commandments were given, the "stranger that was within the gates" of the Israelites was a party recognised in them. But when God, as we may presume, thought that in Egypt this company of Preachers had remained long enough to answer his designs, and was disposed to lead them elsewhere, still to spread a knowledge of himself over the earth, the means by which he again put them in motion were his command of the elements; the thunder, the lightning, the hail, the plague, were his messengers to Pharaoh, and were the instruments by which he accomplished the

delivery of his chosen race, and directed their steps to other lands. Still the system of inanimate nature very intimately coupled with the religious improvement of mankind, and the extension of the kingdom of God. The same dispensation is still more manifestly observable in the government of Israel under the Mosaic covenant. If the Israelites *kept God's commandments*, they were to be blessed in the field, the Lord was to make them plenteous in goods, in the fruit of the ground; he was to open unto them his good treasure, to give rain unto their land in its season. If, on the other hand, they *sinned* against him, then were they to be cursed in the field, in the fruit of the land; they were to be smitten with extreme burning, and with drought, and with blasting, and with mildew: and the heaven over them was to be brass, and the earth under them iron, and the rain to be nothing but a rain of powder and dust. All serving to show that it was a part of God's plan to knit together the *moral* and the *natural* system of things, and to make the one act upon the other. And accordingly, as a matter of fact, we do find incidental allusions to the occurrence of famines in the future history of the Jews; more frequent as the worship of Baal and other sins drew them on towards the captivity, and filled up the measure of their iniquity (Jer. xii. 4.); some of the minor prophets making this judgment their theme, almost beyond any other (Amos iv. 6 *et seq.*: Joel *passim*); even to deriving from it ordinary figures of speech (Amos viii. 11); and one of the kings of Judah, Uzziah, devoting himself to husbandry, probably from the straits the country had been reduced to by reason of it (2 Chron. xxvi. 10); more blessed in this his deed, had he continued to couple with it the religious reformation of his people, which he begun (2 Chron. xxvi. 4), but

abandoned (ver. 5); and had he remembered that the land was laid desolate, not merely to awake the husbandman, but the sinner; and would resume its fertility not more at the call of the ploughman than of the penitent. And this same dispensation, though not now awarded, it may be, with the same evident and immediate exactness as under the Levitical law, mankind not requiring it now as they did then, for reasons which it would be easy to assign,—this dispensation, I say, is believed by all sober-minded and considerate men still to obtain in a great degree; moved as they are to such conviction by watching the rise and fate of empires, the fortunes of private families of which the secret history is known to them, and above all by their own personal consciousness of the events of their own lives. So that it is in accordance with the prepossessions of mankind that our Church provides prayers for rain, and for “fair weather,” acknowledging that the plague which is the subject of them may have been deserved by us, and begging that we may be thereby taught to amend our lives; and a prayer in the time of dearth and famine, containing a confession that our iniquity may have justly drawn it down. As a further instance of the manner in which it has probably pleased God to make the elements minister to the religious condition of his creatures in more modern times, it seems far from unlikely that the first introduction of the Gospel into this country was an effect of an unusual derangement of the seasons. For that great dearth, which Agabus foretold (as we read in the 12th chapter of the Acts), which was to prevail throughout all the world, and which actually did come to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar, is supposed to have driven many Syrian Christians into the armies of that emperor, as the only way of preserving life; so

that when he came into Britain he brought with him, unconsciously perhaps, those teachers of a more excellent way, who proved a light to lighten our barbarous ancestors, and were the harbingers of that flood of it which was eventually to illumine the isle. Still, therefore, it should seem that it is the plan of Almighty God to make the religious improvement of his creatures go hand in hand with his regulation of the seasons; and it is not too much to suppose that these latter are adjusted in a great measure, perhaps in a chief measure, with a view to this high and paramount object—the life of the *body* being after all a thing of infinitely little consequence when compared with the health and well-being of the *soul*—and that in any dispensation of God, the one cannot be consulted only or chiefly, and the other be overlooked or disregarded. For indeed He appears to govern by a scale, according to the dignity of the end he has in view; and thus *plants* were made in subservience to *animals*, which are the more worthy; for “to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth wherein there is life, God,” we are told, “gave every green herb for meat:” and animals were made in subservience to *man*, which is the more worthy still; for man, we are told again, “was to have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth:” and the whole was made in subservience to God’s own glory, which is accomplished in the righteousness of his moral creatures, the worthiest and highest end of them all: and this whole will have to be broken up and burned, like a thing that has done its office, so soon as the probation of the moral beings that occupy it is completed, and

God has made up the number of his elect. Therefore it is that we read in the Book of Job, "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I *have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?*" (xxxviii. 22.) That is, can you or any short-sighted man look into my secret armouries, saith God, or understand how I wield the seasons as my instruments for executing my will? And to the same purpose we find the Psalmist breaking out into expressions which couple God's preaching to his people with his guidance of the elements: "*He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth,*" says he, "his word runneth very swiftly. He giveth *snow* like wool, he scattereth the *hoar-frost* like ashes. He casteth forth his *ice* like morsels: who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word and melteth them, he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow. He *sheweth his word unto Jacob*, his statutes and ordinances unto Israel." And in the words of my text he appeals to the elements to tell forth God's glory, inasmuch as whatever they are, and whatever they do, they are his agents, and are accomplishing his work, "Fire and hail, snow and vapours, wind and storm," not coming and going by chance and at random, "but *fulfilling his word.*" And this they do, no doubt, in a thousand mysterious ways, of which we do not and cannot take particular notice. But some of the consequences—I mean the *moral and religious* consequences which flow from an untimely season, for instance—we may trace for ourselves, and thus find the glory of God displayed, and I will add, his mercy too, in the dispensation we are called upon to contemplate and mourn over this day.

1. For first, a visitation like this naturally turns

our thoughts, even in spite of ourselves, to the primary source from which all our supplies proceed, to the *Providence* of God, on which we begin to perceive sensibly, that we must, after all, repose. "Be gracious, *heaven*," is the prayer we find fittest for the most diligent husbandman, when he has finished his toil—"Be gracious, *heaven*, for man has done his part," and that part how insignificant! We are taught, I repeat, to feel sensibly, that he who commands these seasons which put us in jeopardy and make us afraid, who can say to one element, Go, and it goeth, and to another, Come, and it cometh, is the Being who holds our life in his hand after all; is the Being who "upholds all things;" and that all things, if he uphold them not, must quickly come to an end, and we amongst the number. A fierce element, nay, a mean insect let loose upon us, (for even the canker-worm, the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm, are styled by the prophet God's great army, Joel ii. 25), serves to shew in what merciful subjection the Almighty for the most part restrains them. And as a shock upon a level road reminds us, what we might otherwise forget, how smooth is its surface in general, so do the stars in their courses, when they are allowed to war against us for a while, admonish us how uniformly they are made "to sing together."

Now any event by which we are called to this lively sense of the Providence of God—of the absolute need we stand in of his constant protection—of the goodness with which it is perpetually vouchsafed—of the many things which must daily and hourly go right in order that we may experience the blessings and comforts we do; nay, even the very lowest and least of them—any event which begets these thoughts in us, however dismal in itself, is for good; such thoughts are often the beginnings of wisdom, the day of small things not to be

despised. It is the necessity under which the poor are laid to bear this wholesome correction always about them, that fits them above others, as they are ever represented to be in Scripture, for the reception of the gospel of Christ in power. For they are ever walking on the very verge of want. They live, as it were, on *trust*. Theirs is a life of constant expedients. Give us *this* day our daily bread, is a prayer which they can put up in faith. They need not have recourse to the Greek, to find whether the phrase may not admit a laxer interpretation; for, like Elijah, they practically know and feel that it is from God, and no other, that they have to expect in their penury, their morning and evening meal. They have no stores laid up for many years. There is nothing to tempt them to imagine for a moment that they are above the reach of hunger. They watch the clouds, the dearth or abundance of the former and latter rain, with a personal anxiety; and the clause of our Liturgy, a Liturgy which in one place or other comes home to the heart of every man who has a heart within him, with a force of its own, arrests their devotion above that of other worshippers, that "it would please God to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth, so as in due time we may enjoy them." For they acknowledge, and are convinced, that they at least are at the mercy of a blight or storm, or bad harvest; that however others may fare, who can eat of the fat of the land, who can say, lo! is not the whole country before us? *their* fate must be, in the case of failure of the crops, to struggle through the winter with scanty and unwholesome food, and encounter most likely in the spring the fever which follows at its heels to eat up the strength which the famine had spared. All this tends to make them confess, not in theory merely, but in very

deed, and as a matter felt by them to be true, that they are in God's hand, and prepares them for the teaching of Him who requires above all things the humble and confiding heart. Such is the natural effect of a precarious subsistence on the sentiments of those who are exposed to it. And accordingly I think we may perceive that in its degree the present emergency has carried this feeling to a higher class, has subdued the spirits of many much above the poor; that it has hushed our over-confident speculations, unused as we have for a long time been to such monitors, and almost beguiled as we had been into the fancy that the resources of the earth were in our own keeping; that it has confounded mere economical debates; and suggested misgivings to reasoners who resolve every thing into physical and secondary causes, and there stop—the process of investigating such causes, no doubt, innocent in itself, and a lawful and even a noble application of the powers God has given us, but still to be pursued under the impression, that push our inquiries of this kind as far as we will, there comes at last a great gulf which no human sagacity can bridge over—the manner in which spirit acts upon matter—the laws by which the First Cause of all touches the subordinate ones. “For all these regular motions,” says the greatest of our philosophers on closing his immortal work, as though desiring to lift up the minds of his readers above even his own sublime physical inquiries, “all these regular motions have not their origin in causes mechanical...but must be subject to the government of the One. He directs all things, not as the soul of the world, but as the *Lord* of the universe; and by reason of this his dominion has the title of παντοκράτωρ, the Universal Ruler¹.” And however

¹ Newton's *Principia*, Vol. III. p. 673.

we may account for the motions of the limbs by principles of anatomy, or of the fluids by principles of circulation, and thus go beyond the peasant in this sublunary philosophy, we are still as much in the dark with respect to the action of the soul on the body as the merest clown. It cannot be denied, that for whatever reason—whether from the engrossing investigation of these second causes which has of late years been carried on with so much success; or from alarm, not groundless in itself, at a religious system which had peopled the world with spurious miraculous agencies; or from both these circumstances,—a jealousy has long been felt amongst us of admitting the interference of spiritual beings in the affairs of this material world. They have been in the ordinary creed of the day almost excluded from it, whether they be evil or good. And it is with reserve and hesitation that we understand, on the one hand, how there is a devil walking about seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. v. 8); a prince of the powers of the air (Eph. ii. 2); rulers of the darkness of this world, not of flesh and blood, against whom we have to wrestle; spiritual wickedness, or wicked spirits in high, *i. e.* in heavenly places (Eph. vi. 12); demons possessing and plaguing the bodies of men: and on the other hand, angels of our own that always behold our Father's face (Matt. xviii. 10); ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation (Hebr. i. 14); and present in our congregations, because of whom our women should be veiled" (1 Cor. xi. 10). Yet do not all these propositions rest upon the plain words of Scripture; of which the interpretation that is furthest from the literal, as Hooker teaches us, is usually furthest from the truth? and are they not propositions which were never doubted by

the master minds of former generations, and which enter most largely into the whole system of Theology, from the most primitive times, to those of comparatively modern date—from the times of Tertullian and Origen, to those of Andrews and Barrow? But I can believe some respect for that more ancient faith is revived by the crisis which has overtaken us; and that the silence, may I not say the reverential silence, with which the suggestion of a general Fast has been received in almost all quarters, and even by those who under ordinary circumstances might have been tempted to scoff at such a refuge in our distress, is a testimony that all of us, wise as well as simple, are staggered at the spectacle before us, and are at least in doubt whether on this occasion it may not be true, that the judgments of God are abroad in the earth. But what an invaluable lesson is that, however dearly bought, which brings God thus nigh to us, to all classes among us; and thoughtless as we are, and debased by the material things that solicit our senses on every side, realizes before us, even before the highest as well as the least credulous in the land, the intimate presence of the Deity, and our absolute dependence upon Him.

2. Again, this stern visitation cannot fail, one would hope and believe, of making those whose case it is to be clothed and fed and lodged delicately, very sensible that they are basking in God's peculiar bounty; that He in whose hands is the disposing of the lot of life, has caused theirs to fall upon a ground much fairer than they deserve. They cannot help feeling that they can boast nothing within them, or discern anything about them, in right of which they can challenge this preference. They know but too well that they are not

wiser or better, more just or temperate, more chaste or holy, more patient or true, than thousands around them, who are nevertheless at this moment steeped in misery ; that though these are the Galileans on whom the tower has fallen, their own escape is not to be imputed to their superior virtue ; nay, that in these *national* calamities, the judgment is not inflicted, because those who prove the victims of it especially called it down, but perhaps because there were not virtuous men enough in the land to stay the plague. So was it with Sodom. So was it afterwards with Jerusalem itself. “Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem,” says Jeremiah, “and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find *a man*, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it” (v. 1). Rather will they enter into the feelings of Boerhaave, which dictated, we are told, the thought whenever he saw a criminal led to the scaffold, “It is of God’s mere mercy that I am not in that man’s place.” How wholesome are such reflections as these ! how precious the occasion which prompts them ! for it is rarely a bias of the mind which belongs to prosperity. Ease and fullness of bread beget high thoughts, not lowly ones. It is against those above us, not those below us, that we are ever measuring ourselves : and whilst the latter practice would suggest to us only contentment and thankfulness, the other only engenders in us emulation and envy and strife. How merciful an interposition, then, to many, to most persons of the class I contemplate, awful as it is in itself, is that which fixes, irresistibly fixes, for a time at least, our attention on our poorer brethren ; which familiarizes us with their privations ; which opens to us their haunts and their habits ; which leads us to review their squalid huts, their scanty clothes, their course and insuf-

ficient food ; and I will add, which often inspires us with wonder and admiration at the virtues, more than heroic, which are in attendance on those hardships, and indeed which grow out of them ! How calculated is such a crisis to change our habits of self-inflated comparison ; to reduce and direct our speculations to another quarter ; and to impress on us the practical moral, that our truest wisdom is not “to mind high things, but to condescend to men of low estate.”

3. Nor is this all, not only are we thus taught a lesson of humility and thankfulness, but also one of pity and active charity. The sight of the sufferings of others is ordained by a merciful law of our being to give us a pang which seeks its own relief in the relief of them, and he who holds his hand feels that he is offending against that law, a relic of the shattered image of God in which man was first made. The priest and Levite in the parable, though they would not yield to its humane suggestions, acknowledged that they felt its force ; for even they, when they saw the wounded traveller, that had fallen among thieves, had the grace to pass by on the *other side*—even they would not do violence to their nature, by tarrying to contemplate his sufferings, but tried to escape from their own secret upbraidings for the hardness of their own hearts, by getting as far as they could out of sight of an object that was painful to them. But this natural feeling, planted in us by God to pity and relieve distress, would soon be impaired or expire, if objects of distress were not from time to time presented to it ; it requires such food to feed upon, that it may be cherished and kept alive and in activity ; without such calls upon it, it would go out, like a fire without a timely supply of fuel. For this reason, amongst others, it is said, that it is better to go to a house of

mourning than to a house of feasting; that sorrow is better than laughter, for that by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better; that the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth (Eccles. vii. 2): and that Job, aware how riotous prosperity hardens all within, and petrifies the feelings, "after his sons had been feasting in their houses, every one his day, sent for them when it was over, and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings, according to the number of them all." (Job i. 5.) It is a sure saying of our Lord, that it is more blessed to give than to receive; but in order to realise this blessing our sensibility must be awaked. When we indolently throw an alms to a beggar by the highway side to relieve ourselves of his importunity, this blessing is not appreciated or even felt: our sensibility must be awaked; an appetite must be created in us for discharging the duty of beneficence by an object that really excites it; and then a gratification accompanies the act, as it does the indulgence of any other lawful appetite: we must be athirst to enjoy the spring; hungry to enjoy food, and moved to pity to enjoy the prerogative of doing good. And here is one of the greatest temptations of affluence and ample estate, that such a condition does not usually bring its possessors into much close intercourse with scenes of suffering; they are in danger of judging of the world at large by that portion of it with which they are chiefly conversant, and *there* much is not to be found, except its frivolities and follies, that need excite their compassion. Therefore it may be that God occasionally interferes, and sows scenes of undeniable distress more thickly, and gives them a poignancy beyond the com-

mon, in order that the stagnant commiseration and charity of many may be stirred and put in motion. This is another beneficial consequence which may be drawn from a season of dearth; it may soften the hearts of people who abound.

4. Again—the unusual calls which are made upon us at such a moment—the embarrassment we are under from the number and indisputable necessities of the claimants on our bounty, and the limited extent to which we are able to respond to them,—may cause us to reconsider the manner in which we have been hitherto disposing of the means we possess, and to bethink ourselves how much has been squandered on selfish or trivial evils, which had it been now forthcoming might have saved even the life of man. Doubtless, this subject very easily admits of a fanatical view; but Scripture does not encourage any such. When it was observed to our blessed Lord that the ointment might have been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor; for some reason or other he did not applaud the remark. When Zacchæus told Jesus that one half of his goods he dispersed in this manner, Jesus did not make answer, Why not more? Though, even then with the remainder he would have been far above millions of his fellow-men; for we read that “he was rich”—but, “this day,” was our Lord’s reply, “is salvation come to thine house.” (Luke xix .9.) Jesus did not refuse “to be with the rich in his death,” neither did he ever condemn the prodigality of the friend who brought an hundred pound weight of spices to do honour to his corpse. The community of goods of which we read, among the early Christians, was only a community of such goods as constituted the exchequer of the Church; over which the individual contributors had no longer any personal

controul, after they had supplied their contingent ; but still they could reserve for their own use as much or as little of their own property as they pleased, free from the Church's interference—"After the possession was sold," says St. Peter to Ananias, "was it not in thine own power?" Was it not at thine own option even then to contribute more of it or less? And accordingly, we still read of appeals to the more affluent Christians in behalf of the more needy, and of exhortations to those whom God had prospered to lay by them in store upon the first day of the week for those that were in want (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2): appeals and exhortations which could not have been urged had there been an absolute community of goods.

It is no fanatical view, therefore, of property which Scripture invites us to form, nor does it plead for any equal division of it amongst all. Indeed, how grievously any such structure of society would aggravate distress when it comes in force, is demonstrated by the present aspect of the sister kingdom, exasperated as that distress is on the one hand by so large a proportion of its population being actually on a level ; and on the other hand, relieved as it is, so far as it is relieved, by there being still left superior classes in that country and in this to whom the misery has not yet mounted. But though Scripture advocates no such extreme theory as this, it does suggest another under which property should be administered ; that it should be under a sense of our responsibility to God for its use, and of the account we shall have to render for it at the last. The parable of the talents, that of the unjust steward, that of the rich man and the beggar, all point to this principle. The Levitical decree, "the land is *mine*, and ye are strangers and sojourners with me," is still founded

on it. And surely this consideration ought especially to touch *us*—no people in the world being so clamorous for the introduction of the principle of responsibility into all their relations as ourselves, or so loud in its praise. It is the principle, the only principle, which is supposed to render the exercise of authority in any degree undefined, safe and harmless: the constable, the magistrate, the minister, even the parliament, are all in an ascending series to be controlled and held in check by it. Alas! let us not stop short at the most critical point of all, and forget the final responsibility to God—the crown and consummation of the climax; for unless in this scale of delegated trusts, the last earthly depository of power be itself responsible—and to whom can it be except to God in heaven?—we are living under an irresponsible government after all. This principle then, I say, which in human affairs is thought to act so well, let us enforce on ourselves with respect to property—there can be no better field for its application—and let every man who has possessions, wield them, as talents committed to his keeping, not laid under very circumstantial restrictions, or subjected to any very precise laws, but simply committed to him under an understanding from God, that they are to be accounted for. Then will a moment of intense disaster like the present, which brings along with it importunate calls for help from those who are in a condition to bestow it, be calculated to quicken that principle; to induce men to apply that safe standard to the management of the unrighteous mammon, more rigorously than before; and thus once more will the calamity be blessed in its consequences, and the mysterious dealings of God be vindicated. It would be so in any condition of society, how much more in one so artificial and luxurious

as our own; where the sarcastic philosopher of old, on casting his eyes around him, might be forgiven if he said, "how many things are there here which I want not!" But if such be the case; if there be, as must, I fear, be confessed, such waste in some classes, and such want in others, amongst us, God may have seen fit to remind us in his displeasure by a severe memento, of a truth we had forgotten, or were in danger of forgetting, that "we are stewards," and that "it is required of stewards that they be found faithful!"

5. There is another aspect of the subject which I might dwell upon, were I addressing an audience of a different complexion and rank from that now before me; and which even as it is I cannot altogether forego—the righteous purposes which a season of suffering like the present may work out, if properly improved, on the poor as well as on the rich. God knows that it is in no other than a most friendly spirit to them that I say it; but that trial cannot be otherwise than beneficial to them which necessarily teaches them *foresight*, which leads them when in comparative prosperity to contemplate the evil day. Nay, that implicit surrender of themselves to God's good care, which I before said belonged to them and their circumstances, must be guarded by this caution, to be safe. And no man, therefore, can be a more real benefactor to the poor, than he who takes every opportunity which presents itself of urging on them by every means the exercise of this cardinal virtue—a virtue so conspicuous as to be considered by mankind eminently characteristic of the Deity, so that by common consent they designate Him by it; as if all his other attributes were lost in it or eclipsed by it; and when they speak of *Providence*, they speak of *God*. It is the triumph of the future over the present, of faith

over sight; and which beginning with things of time, may end with those of eternity. For though this is not always the result; and though it is made matter of reproach in Scripture that men who can discern the face of the sky, cannot discern the signs of the times; and that the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light; yet assuredly it may be taken as a truth, that where men are reckless about the future in things temporal, they are seldom heedful about them in things eternal, and that he who is unconcerned about providing for his family, is usually unconcerned too about providing for his soul. Everybody who has looked at all into the circumstances of the poor must be aware, that when once they have gathered households about them, it is out of their power to do more than meet the wants of the passing day; and that if sickness or domestic disaster of any kind overtakes them, it confounds all the schemes even of the most far-seeing amongst them, and casts them on the bounty of others, or the pittance supplied by the humanity of the law. Still it is clear, too, that the poor differ very much in the comforts they enjoy, and in the resources they contrive to raise for themselves, even when their opportunities are the same, and the demands upon their earnings the same. This difference, therefore, can only arise from the exercise on their part of a greater or less degree of forethought; and the lesson which a famine reads, terrible as is the teacher, is a lesson of forethought. When the tyranny is overpast, the moral of it may remain, and the sharp affliction of the moment may be found to have established prudential habits that shall be lasting; such as may relieve poverty from some of its most pinching necessities for ever; and superinduce, besides, that sobriety of

thought, the absence of which in the nation of Israel the prophets bewail, as counteracting all God's merciful intentions towards them, when they use the simple language, "my people will not *consider*."

6. But there is one consequence more, proper to a calamity like the present which it would be strange to overlook, for it is the most obvious one of any. A poet of old, familiar to us all, tells us, that in popular commotions, when the passions are roused, and stones and firebrands fly about, the madness of the moment supplying missiles; even in the midst of this scene of anarchy, if by chance a man of sterling worth and acknowledged virtue presents himself, the tumult subsides, the combatants are hushed, and one and all dispose themselves to hear and obey his voice. Now if such be the effect of the interposition even of a good man amongst a multitude of infuriated heathens, what must needs be that, unless we are senseless indeed, of Almighty God himself, amidst the feuds and factions of a still Christian country? He surely cannot speak in accents such as he is now using, and not be listened to! The passions of men must be calmed by such a presence, and sink in submission before it. On the restoration of David to his throne, an angry altercation arose between the men of Israel and the men of Judah; and the words of the men of Judah, we are told, were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel; and much intestine wrangling ensued; but then came the three years' famine, year after year, and we read no more of the quarrel. A season of common distress naturally binds, or ought to bind, all classes, rich and poor, high and low, more closely together. Estrangements among the several orders of society give way before it; healthier feelings succeed on a near and benevolent intercourse;

on a reciprocity of acts of generosity and gratitude ; and each man is probably surprised to find his fellow far from being the monster he had supposed him. All consent to regard themselves as members of a universal Church, of which Christ is the head ; which requires duties of them accordingly for conscience' sake ; and no longer as citizens of the same state, only bound not to disobey its laws. For the law, they now feel, is not made for righteous men, but for unholy and profane. The government of God supersedes every other ; and the picture which St. Paul draws of a Christian community is more nearly approached ; "the eye no more saying to the hand, I have no need of thee ; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you ; but the body so tempered together that there is no schism in it ; all the members having the same care one of another." Alas ! that we should be so fallen, as to be dead to these tender influences till misery softens us to them. But it was even through the same agony that the spirit of Christianity itself had to win its way ; and though our Lord bequeathed the Gospel to the world as a legacy of peace, it was not to be enjoyed till it had first acted as a sword.

What then, if through a harmony, the result of affliction, God may be preparing better things for the land which is the chief scene of it ! What if a crisis, unforeseen by the most sagacious politician, uninfluenced by the most powerful, may be God's way of setting them all aside, and laying for himself the foundations of a nation's prosperity, and renovating its social relations ! What, if in the abeyance of carnal irritation and passion, those springs of action, which would otherwise have worked only confusion and violence, become the most effective auxiliaries of good ; as the strongest animals,

when once they can be domesticated, become the most valuable of all ! What if a necessity, which would otherwise have burst all bounds, should only produce an obedience which the most despotic authority could never have compelled ! What if a distress, which would otherwise have urged to lawless rapacity, should only reconcile to sacrifices which no appeal to reason could have rendered tolerable ! What if a desperation, which might otherwise have goaded to frantic excesses, should only inspire a courage to grapple with difficulties, which no other impulse could have awaked ; and if, roused by an imperious call to exertion, the spirits of men mount with the occasion, and rally to the rescue with a wisdom, and presence of mind, not so much their own as that of the times on which they are cast, or, rather, of God who constrains them by force of events to accomplish his own merciful designs, now that the day for so doing is come !

But if such should be the effect in the present instance of the prostration of national jealousies, what cause should we have to feel that God has mixed mercy with his chastisement, and has smitten us friendly whilst he smote, when the crisis he has chosen for himself, through which to consummate this regeneration, is not a crisis characterised by the furious passions of man, but by his patient sufferings ; the remedy not such as springs (which it might well have been expected to do) out of scenes of sanguinary anarchy and civil convulsion, no less destructive of life perhaps than the present, and ruinous for the time being of many virtues, but out of scenes actually instigating to the exercise of all the meeker ones ; of resignation, and endurance, and faith, and hope, and charity ; which calls for the services of the clergyman and the almoner, instead of the soldier and

the sword ; and sends our fleets across the channel laden with food to save life, instead of artillery to destroy it ; which, however it may be, and doubtless is, the scourge of sin, has nothing sinful in itself, but much that is holy ; and which, after it shall have done its work, however searching it may have been, and however deeply affecting the fortunes of thousands, will leave no rankling animosities behind, like revolutions effected by arms ; and no danger therefore of a vindictive recoil. How forcibly then does the present distress appeal to us ; and, may I not add, how opportunely ; by the largest motives, as well as by local ones, to listen to the Apostle, “and follow after the things which make for peace !” (Rom xiv. 19.)

Such are some of the great moral and religious purposes which God may have in view in sending amongst us a season of trouble like the present ; and we therefore shall be found to be fighting against God if we do not second these overtures from him. He calls us on this fast-day, not merely to afflict our souls for our sins past, though that he does, since, had they not been committed, this evil perhaps need not have befallen us, for the correction it administers would not have been required ; but also to amend our ways for the future. The fast which God chooses, let us remember, is not so much that we “bow down our heads as a bulrush,” as that we “loose the bands of wickedness ;” not merely stoop before the rebuke as deserved, which none can dream of disputing, and there rest in passive despondency and dejection ; but review the plagues of our hearts, to which it seems more especially to point, and take heed that we sin in like manner no more. It is long since we have had, as a nation, (may it be longer still before we shall again need) such a challenge from God.

For all the preachers in England might have the gift of Apollos, and might urge upon their hearers the duty of realizing God's presence, living ever as in their great Taskmaster's eye ; of content, and humility, and thankfulness ; of active charity ; of self-restraint, and self-denial in subservience to it ; of thoughtfulness and circumspection ; of dwelling in harmony with one another, in mutual love ;—all the preachers in England, I say, might enlarge upon these matters as much and as eloquently as they please : but the practical effect of their sermons would be only that of a tinkling cymbal, compared with the *teaching* of one dearth of bread, when God himself takes up the text, and makes His own awful voice to be heard.

Let us hearken to it, and lay it to heart, each one for himself : for the chastisement of a *nation* is a warning to every man of whom it consists ; and holy men of old so regarded it. Ezra identifies himself with the trespasses and consequent troubles of his whole race, and cries to God for mercy, saying, “ *I am ashamed*” (ix. 6). Jeremiah, when mourning over the fall of Jerusalem, still taxes himself with the share which he, even he the prophet of God, had borne in drawing the judgment upon it down, and pours out his confession before Him almost throughout the “ *Lamentations*” in *personal* humiliation (i. 18 ; iii. 1. seq.) Let us do the like ; and beware how we trifle with God when he speaks to us.

7. For what a Being He is to provoke, the present calamity (and this is the last reflection I shall make on it) cannot fail to impress on us. What instruments of punishment do we plainly see are his ; and with what severity too, when there is a cause for it, do we perceive that even He, longsuffering as he is, can wield them ! A God of compassion, but a God of vengeance also : “ *Who smote*

great kings ; for his *mercy* endureth for ever : yea, and *slew* mighty kings ; for his *mercy* endureth for ever." (Ps. cxxxvi. 17, 18.) What snares has He ever hanging over our heads, which he can drop on us, like the fowler, in an instant ; and we are taken in them, and there is none to save ! If He is so terrible in an earthly visitation, (how terrible, we who are not spectators of it can have but a faint idea), let us carry forward our thoughts with the prophet Joel on a like occasion, (comp. i. 4, 12 ; ii. 11, 31), and ask ourselves, what will He be when he comes in his dreadful majesty to judge the world once for all ; a sight we shall assuredly see with our own eyes ? If the destruction of the *lives* of human beings appals us so fearfully, what must be the horror of the spectacle. when the destruction of their *souls* is the catastrophe ! not the first, but the second death ! When we can no longer, as now, render one another help, or receive it from one another : for no man will be able to deliver his brother, or make agreement with God for him then ! Then the only bread which will suffice to sustain life, is that which should have been partaken of long before ; even that bread from heaven, whereof if a man eateth he shall never die. The only cup, that cup of living water, whereof whoso shall have drank, will never thirst : no, not when the heavens are on fire, and the elements are melting with fervent heat.

Let us haste, while we have time, to pray with the multitude, but with a better knowledge of what we ask, " Lord, evermore give us this bread ;" with the woman of Samaria, " Sir, give us this water ;" that so there may be found in us when we die that quickening principle which even the last enemy cannot extinguish or impair, and we may rise immortal both in body and soul.

ERRATA.

- Page 40, note, *for Phileteuth., read Phileleuth.*
„ 52, line 1 and 9, *for ὁμοθυμαδὸν, read ὁμοθυμαδόν.*
„ 10, *for exaltation, read exultation.*
„ 107, „ 14, *for evils, read ends.*

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